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ABSTRACT

A general picture of mass communication study and mass communication research is presented in this report. The report is primarily intended for media personnel and administrators involved in mass communication efforts in developing countries. The development of mass communication and the dynamic process of information flow are discussed. In addition, detailed comments on the media "communicators," the audiences, and the concepts of credibility, leadership, and appeal are voiced. The emphasis of the report is on the ultimate effects and effectiveness of mass communications as they pertain to developing nations. Previously announced as ED 071 110, RIEMAY73. (MC)

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The practice of mass communication :

Some lessons from research

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The practice of mass communication :

Some lessons from research

By Y. V. Lakshmana Rao

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PREFACE

The present publication concerns the ever-growing need for research, not only to be carried out but made available to the practitioners and administrators of mass communication. Unesco has always been concerned with the existing gap of knowledge and understanding between the researcher and the producer. This was pointed out strongly at the Meeting of Experts on Mass Communication and Society (Montreal, 21-30 June 1969) and consequently it was felt that a study such as this one should be commissioned.

As a result of his wide experience in research and formely in journalism and the administration of communication programmes, the author of this study, Dr. Y.V.L. Rao, Director of the Asian Mass Communication Information and Research Centre (AMIC), carefully explains when, why and how various types of communication research can be of great help to the practitioners and decision-makers. Also, Dr. Rao provides us with numerous examples of applying research to determine the effects and effectiveness of the media, especially in the developing countries.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to a better understanding and a fuller co-operation between the researcher and the practitioner of mass communication.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - AND AN APOLOGY

This book is an attempt at synthesizing and presenting, in relatively uncomplicated form, communication research findings for the use of media practitioners and administrators of communication campaigns, especially in the developing countries.

To the extent that it has drawn heavily on the writings and contributions of many scholars, it is not original. It is perhaps different, however, only because it tries to indicate some practical uses to which the findings of research can be put. Those who have contributed to the field of knowledge of mass communication are the real authors of the book, especially those who have themselves tried in the past to compile anthologies or bring together the findings of communication research into what may be called "state-of-the-art" presentations. Such books, however, have been, by and large, meant for other scholars or for students in schools and colleges.

I express my gratitude to the editors of such anthologies and to the compilers and the synthesizers. While there are too many to name individually, my special thanks go to those from whose works I have particularly benefited. They are: Wilbur Schramm, Charles Wright, Alex Edelstein, Theodore Peterson, Jay W. Jensen, William L. Rivers and Joseph Klapper. Of course, there are others whose individual researches have also been used. I thank all these scholars.

An apology is also due to them because I am aware of having taken liberties with their work by rewording, reformulating, "translating" and especially by extrapolating. I can only hope that they will appreciate the need for this in a book of this kind, meant for a special kind of an audience. If in the process of such translation and extrapolation, errors have crept in or nuances have been ignored (often deliberately), that responsibility is entirely mine. Partly to save any possible embarrassment to the scholars whose contributions have been "used" in this way and partly to make for easier reading on the part of the potential reader of this type of book, direct quotations and footnotes have been avoided wherever possible - rightly or wrongly.

Whether the end justifies such means or not - in fact, whether the means will really guarantee the end, I do not know.

For the invaluable assistance which I have received in the production of the manuscript, I cannot adequately thank the two people who have helped most: Sonny Francis and Jessie Tan.

To my former colleagues in Unesco and to that praiseworthy Organization, my gratitude for the opportunity provided to me - and for their patience.

Singapore, October 1971. Y.V.L. RAO

INTRODUCTION

Arthur Christiansen, a name every newspaper man immediately recognizes, had the habit of dictating each day some thought which came to him during his daily work as editor of the Daily Express. In his book, Headlines All My Life, he has a chapter in which he has reproduced some of his "daily bulletins", one of them reads:

"I wish there was some way for newspaper men to diagnose how much of any single issue of the newspaper is read. Are there people who read every line of it, as we must? Do most people 'dig' reading only that which appeals to them? I take the view that these are the majority".

There are now ways in which a newspaper, or for that matter the programmes of broadcasting networks or the content of films, can and are being diagnosed. Christiansen, in his time, did a magnificient job with the Daily Express without the benefit of such diagnosis. One of the qualities attributed to him was his ability to put himself in the shoes of the "common man" (an ability referred to as "empathy") and feel the average person's feelings, etc. His advice to newspaper men, contained in another of his daily bulletins was: "It would do everyone connected with Fleet Street - especially editors - a power of good if they spent an occasional day off in unfamiliar territory seeing the newspaper reader as he is at work and play. In familiar territory, in the neighbourhood of your own home, you don't get the same perspective". Or again, "Keep typographical layout tricks under control. There is much virtue in simplicity. Always the reader outside Fleet Street should be considered".

No one denies that there were giants among newspaper men in days gone by (and among broadcasters and other communicators in more recent times) who, by informal means and through experience, developed a rough idea of the composition of their audiences. But for every such person, there are probably hundreds of media practitioners, who despite the development of communication research, continue to ask themselves the same questions even today:

How many persons read my publication; what kinds of persons read it; am I printing the kind of things my audience wants to read about? Is my style of presentation easy or hard? How can I improve my presentation in terms of layout, typography, etc? How can I improve the content of my publication and increase the size of my audience?

Let us take a look at another kind of communication "practitioner" who is far less known than Christiansen but who perhaps did just as much, in his own small way for his small newspaper (relatively speaking). His name is Sidney S. Goldish who was the research director of a middletown U.S. newspaper. He worked closely with the rest of the staff of his newspaper - in other words he was a member of a team which produced the newspaper and in which his own speciality was research. His job was to try and find the answers to the questions which occurred to other members of his team. Several years ago in an address to an editors' conference he had this to say:

"We use research as a tool, to augment our knowledge of the readers and markets served by our newspaper and to assist in decision-making processes... Research is a service department. It exists to serve other departments - news, editorial, advertising, circulation - and also to serve management".

Goldish admitted that his newspaper's commitments of manpower and money to research had been "substantial in past years, and they are growing... The implication is clear: we believe newspaper research is worth while ... useful... necessary". He then went on to give concrete examples of how such continuing research had helped his newspaper achieve not only a more satisfied readership but also a wider readership and therefore, a more satisfied publisher as well. He concluded his address by saying that research was a procedure that enabled both editors and advertisers "to gauge the impact of their offerings to readers and also makes it possible to try out new ideas - to test the kind of reception a new or different approach will get from readers... Anything that helps to take the guess work out of the editing

process is worth while. Research is capable of providing a strong assist. If you will grant that the decision supported by proveable fact is more likely to be correct than one based on conjecture, surmise or tradition, then - so far as (my newspaper) editors are concerned - research has justified itself".

PRACTICAL USES

Among the examples that Goldish gives of the practical uses of research on his newspaper are the following:

1. Once, in the course of an opinion survey it was learnt that readers in appreciable numbers failed to distinguish between the opinion and comment columns of the newspaper's editorial pages and the news pages themselves. Many people, he learnt, were unaware of the distinction which to newspaper men is so apparent that it is taken for granted. The editor felt after looking at the survey conclusions that an occasional reminder to the readers about this distinction could be helpful. So a small two-column box was devised and inserted on the editorial pages at regular intervals. The box told the reader clearly that the editorial page was the newspaper's "opinion page". The reader's attention was also drawn to a "second opinion page" when found necessary.

2. On the basis of readership research findings a new summary was carried on page one with a series of news digest items each of which was then keyed to the page where a fuller account was given. This was done on the basis of the finding that reader interest in news shorts was high. The news digest items also performed another function; they encouraged the reader to turn to inside pages. Later readership figures showed an increase of 35% to 45% for that column.

3. In the course of a study preceding the newspaper's plans to redesign its format it was found that 7 out of 10 adults wore eye glasses and that most of them regularly wore glasses when reading. Therefore the decision was taken to introduce a larger body type, switching from 8-point type on a 9-point slug, to a 9-point body type on a $9\frac{1}{2}$ point slug.

4. The newspaper opened up inside pages for news holes, because of the finding that a mixed content page - i.e. a page carrying both news and advertising - gained considerably in readership where there was adequate space on the page for some display of news. It therefore became a rule that from then on the news space on a mixed content page should contain at least 15 column inches, preferably spread over three adjacent columns and at least 5 inches deep, or over two adjacent columns of greater depth.

5. The newspaper also departmentalized and stressed its suburban news coverage because of research findings that suburban news was not only being read by more than 7 out of 10 adults who lived in the suburbs but also by 6 out of 10 men and women living in the central city itself.

One of the editors of the newspaper called these editorial changes "editorial engineering" and added that in terms of reader satisfaction, advertising gains and circulation growth, such "engineering" appeared to have worked out very well.

Goldish's own discussions of the pros and cons of newspaper research are worth recapitulating. One of the central problems he says, is that many publishers and editors still doubt the usefulness of research. Their usual responses are: "Everything you found out through research, I've known all along; this merely confirms it"; or "You can't edit a newspaper successfully by slide rule"; or "the research that is done isn't practical; it doesn't tell me the things I want to know"; "I know my readers and what they want; after all I've been in this business now for umpty-nine years; and I don't need statisticians to tell me what to do". Goldish's own point of view is that information about readers and what they choose to read is a form of "military-type intelligence" which editors need as their audiences grow and as the society in which those audiences exist becomes more complex.

Continuing his argument, Goldish rightly points out, however, that if we were to treat readership data as binding or if we were to produce newspapers limited to "best-read" types of content, "we'd have the most flamboyant, sensational and frivolous newspapers ever published - because the best-read stories, day in and day out, are usually those heavily vested with violence, sex, controversy and so-called human interest qualities".

The editor must therefore still use his professional judgement on what is important, consequential and significant. But he must also recognize that readers' interests and demands of their newspapers are widely varied and that readers are people with diverse backgrounds and equally diverse informational and entertainment needs. "Editing from the strength of knowledge is to be preferred to editing by hunch, intuition or calculated guess".

"SESAME STREET"

Let us take another example - this time from television. Sesame Street is a children's programme, now watched in 50 countries around the world, by children - and their parents. It has won every major award for its class and unwittingly, but successfully, competed for audience ratings against some of the best commercial productions in the United States. It is a production of the Children's Television Workshop with modest studios in New York.

The original idea for what later turned out to be Sesame Street came to a Mrs. Joan Cooney in 1966. After obtaining support from several funding agencies and foundations, she consulted various

experts as psychologists and children's book illustrators. A great deal of preparation went into the planning of the series and Dr. Edward L. Palmer, formerly an associate research professor in Oregon's State Education System, worked with children across the United States for 18 months, studying their general behavioural patterns and specifically their attention spans, areas of interest, eye movements, etc.

Dr. Palmer and his associates found that the most effective approach to learning "fused the switches of commercial TV, the quick cuts from animate to live action". Transitions were avoided. "We learned", says Dr. Palmer, "that what bores kids is too much time spent on any one subject. Sit and talk straight at them, and children think you are giving them Walter Cronkite" (a noted U.S. Television commentator and news analyst for CBS).

On the basis of the findings of such systematic research, the series was planned and executed with no "anchor man"; children wander around sidewalks and through neighbourhood stores, chatting with their adult hosts. "Learning seems almost a by-product of fun", said Time magazine, reporting on Sesame Street in a special cover story last year.

The producers of Sesame Street have allowed for constant feedback from its audiences and from professional critics and have successfully incorporated some changes as they have gone along. Research before, research during and research after has obviously paid off handsomely and all those associated with the programme have achieved a satisfaction beyond their wildest hopes. Besides, according to an independent educational testing service, "Sesame Street has been sharpening the cognitive skills of poor kids by as much as 62%". It continues to entertain - and educate.

Examples like this where communication research has been harnessed for practical purposes by the practitioners of mass communication are many. Unfortunately, however, they are not always available easily to the average professional. This is partly because the conclusions of specific studies like this, sponsored and done for specific purposes, usually remain within the media units which make use of them. Partly also it is because most practitioners of mass communication, especially in the developing countries where the need is greatest (for reasons which will be explained later) do not have the inclination or the opportunity to expose themselves to mass communication literature. The point that is being made here is that the informal, intuitive and unsystematic ways of answering day-to-day questions are no longer adequate for the modern communicator.

This is because the communication revolution which has taken place has vastly increased the number of communication media and has given the average person access to many media. This has also meant that the competition among the media on the attention of the public has increased tremendously. Since every individual has only so much time to read or to listen to the media, his need for selection among the media output has increased. Therefore it is the medium whose messages are interesting and easy to absorb, whose messages meet the needs of the public, which will succeed.

Another reason for the failure of intuitive methods is the increasing number of people in the audience. More people are entering the ranks of the potential audience of the media everyday, partly because of increasing literacy, partly because of increasing per capita income and partly because of the easier availability of the media. The days of the exclusive audience of a press catering to an élite are disappearing fast and have indeed disappeared already, even in the developing countries. The task of the communicator, therefore, has become far more difficult. Finally, to make the task of the communicator even more difficult, public tastes have been changing. The public is not only getting better educated, but also more sophisticated. Their interests have been broadening through exposure to more communications from outside their immediate environment. These changing tastes and broadening of interests have meant that no communicator can base his decisions on what he knew to be true even a few years ago. He now has to keep constantly in touch with these changes. One of the better ways of doing so is to keep in touch with communication research - an activity which has itself grown up only in the past two decades partly to meet this need. The communication researcher thus becomes a member of the team which produces the ultimate product of a medium of mass communication. He draws from his knowledge of the experiences of past communications, the tested efficiency of present methods and projects this knowledge into the future for the guidance of the communication practitioner. He has tools at his command to do this task in a systematic way. And those tools are constantly being sharpened.

PRINCIPLES, NOT RULES

The purpose of the following discussion is to summarize selectively those aspects (and those aspects alone) of mass communication research to give the practitioner (and the administrator of communication campaigns) a general idea of what mass communication is about and what mass communication research has been able to do so far, and above all to attempt to show that mass communication research can help the practitioner in his day-to-day work. It may not yet be able to answer every single question, general or specific, which the practitioner may have. In any case it is doubtful that this is what the practitioner would like to have. Research cannot and does not provide hard and fast rules for the practitioner. Nor does it intend to do so, even as the principles of layout or of composition are not meant to stifle the individuality and the creative ability of the sub-editor or the

cameraman. There are times when the practitioner decides deliberately to flout principles and perhaps place one double column story directly under another or a cameraman lets a bridge run up and down his picture vertically instead of diagonally. A good practitioner does this deliberately and not because of ignorance; a bad practitioner may do so because he has not been exposed to any principles at all. The practice of journalism has its principles; the practice of mass communication has its principles. But these principles are essentially meant to be guidelines - because communication (like journalism) is at least partly a creative activity. Neither the teachers of the principles of journalism nor the teachers of the principles of mass communication want to stifle individuality or creativity. However, to the extent that these are functional activities as well, they will maintain that the professional must first inform himself of principles and practice so as to become a better journalist or a better communicator in this functional sense.

The newspaperman, the broadcaster, the filmmaker, etc., are being taught the techniques of their profession but their exposure to the principles of mass communication has so far been inadequate. This is not a statement made by researchers but by mass communication practitioners themselves - in many of the training programmes being increasingly organized all over the world by national units, by regional centres and by international organizations.

The following discussion is meant purely as a start to meet such a need. It does not claim to be complete or fully adequate. For, in the last two decades or so the literature of mass communication has burgeoned fast. The practitioner who may want to go deeper into some of the aspects of mass communication theory or research is directed to that literature (see selected titles at the back of the book).

THE RESEARCHER AND THE PRACTITIONER

There are two concepts in mass communication research which the practitioner in newspapers, broadcasting stations, etc., knows intuitively. How accurately is another matter. These two concepts are: "selective exposure" and "selective perception". In simpler terms they merely mean that a reader or viewer or a listener exposes himself to the content of the mass media in a selective way, and that even after he does that, he interprets what he reads or sees, in his own way. This is usually guided by his own needs, interests, abilities - and prejudices. This is true of all of us - including the professional journalist and the communication researcher. And this is true in relationship to each other's products. The practitioner for instance may often pick up some publication in the field of mass communication research but reject it as being "not for me". The researcher too surely turns a page in his daily newspaper or switches channels on his television set with identical words. Often prejudices also show up.

Whatever judgements are made, they are often made very quickly on the basis of a certain "cue". This may be a headline in a newspaper, or the title of a programme on the radio, or the face or the voice of an announcer on television. But often, for the purposes of their own professional work the practitioner and the researcher will bring themselves to sit through or read through material which they would find, under more "normal" circumstances, to be either boring or pompous or useless. The practitioner does this because he needs that background information for his own work; the researcher does this because he may be analysing a certain content and therefore has to monitor a whole series, let us say, of television programmes.

There seems to be as much truth in the practitioner's criticism of the researcher as in the researcher's criticism of the practitioner. These criticisms are too well known in the profession to be discussed in any detail here.

Perhaps the strongest argument one can make for the need to get over any existing prejudices in the field of mass communication is that the age of specialization is now upon us and that therefore we cannot any longer fit into a society adequately without specialized knowledge. For the practitioner of mass communication there is a growing need to inform himself of his own field of activity within the whole gamut of mass communication which has undergone revolutionary changes in the lifetime of most of us who started as newspapermen say, twenty or thirty years ago. The advent of radio and television and the other vast networks of mass communication, including the large-scale governmental communication programmes, has forced us to take another look at our own particular place and our special rôle.

REFRESHER COURSES

The sudden upsurge of activity on the part of professional organizations to run training programmes and refresher courses for working journalists seems to be the most compelling argument for the fact that in the midst of all the changes that are taking place in society we may all have to run to stand still. This includes the communication practitioner, just as it did the general medical practitioner of a few years ago.

The layman looks to the media to inform him and educate him on the changes that are taking place around him so that he can become a more effective member of his society - the farmer within the agricultural revolution, the rural housewives, amidst the revolutions that have been taking place in the areas of hygiene, sanitation and child rearing; young men and women, within the context of

rising costs and rising populations. But what about the communicator within the communication revolution which is now being referred to as a communications "explosion". Traditional practices and beliefs are being questioned constantly and increasingly in all avenues of human behaviour - and communication, which is the life blood of society has caused some of these changes, but in turn has also been affected by them. Communicators who not only expect and encourage societies to make these changes smoothly and effectively but also consider themselves as leaders of opinion, obviously have need for information on communication itself.

We have all heard editors and publishers, for example, asking themselves why their circulation figures are not going up as rapidly as literacy and per capita income? Perhaps some of them, especially in the developing countries, are trying to find out. These efforts are praiseworthy, but for some of the more general questions, there are already some tentative answers provided by people to whom these questions had occurred earlier. One of them might as well point it out to the newcomer, much as Charlie Brown (in a recent Schulz cartoon) told Lucy whom he caught counting snowflakes, "you are wasting your time, I've already done it"!

Unfortunately, however, the relative newness of mass communication research, coupled with the oldness of communication practice have created a situation where, much like a father and son, there has been relatively little common ground for a healthy dialogue. Therefore, each one has achieved a sense of security for himself by confining himself to his special world, even though each must recognize from time to time that, by doing so he has perhaps missed out on something.

NEED FOR DIALOGUE

Professional journals have provided the practitioners with the techniques of communication, such as the art of interviewing, the art of writing, etc., some of them based on research findings and some on experience alone. There is no doubt that both are useful and necessary. However, practitioners of communication have had relatively less opportunity to expose themselves to the more general principles of effective communication based on research done on the communicator himself, the medium in which he specializes, and the audience which he serves. These are the areas which this discussion attempts to cover briefly and selectively.

In a recent article in the professional magazine, The Quill, James Tankard, in an article entitled "Communication Researchers, Speak Up!" made out an excellent case for the need for a greater dialogue between experienced journalists and communication researchers. One of the most specific needs he mentioned "is for more speculation in research articles on the meaning and potential usefulness of findings". Not all research has obvious immediate application, but in many cases where none are mentioned researchers should be able to indicate possible uses".

"Communication research", he warned "does not yet have a more complete scientific rhetoric, it undoubtedly will have some day, but principles of potential use to professional communicators are beginning to emerge. The promotion of such principles appears to be a responsibility of the researcher, and a responsibility he should begin assuming now. The journalist, for his part, should be prepared to give the research a fair hearing". It is in that spirit that this book is being written. Hopefully it will be received in that spirit - by the practitioners of communication without whose active assistance and constructive criticism mass communication researchers might as well close shop.

There seems to be need for a warning here. It is that although we are trying to be guarded in presenting generalizations, we realize that the whole purpose of the book is to present some research conclusions so as to indicate possible uses for the practitioner. There is a danger in this that such conclusions may be misconstrued as "principles" or "rules" for all situations and conditions. This is not so. Some of the conclusions are from studies done under specific conditions. And these may differ in another culture or in another situation. They should therefore be taken only as general guidelines.

Far more research needs to be done and such research needs to be done in different cultures and in different communities and perhaps even in specific media units. For example, some research studies tell us that more adults read the best comic strips on an average day than the front page banner story. Such a finding gives us an indication of the average interest of an average public in a given community. Research also has shown that the average reader spends more time in his metropolitan daily on features than on news. This may or may not be true of all readers of all cities. It is worth finding out for any given paper.

The purpose here is to present a general picture of mass communication study and mass communication research. It is for the practitioner to decide what to do with some of the principles that seem to be emerging. It is also up to him to ask questions - both of himself and of the researcher.

CHAPTER I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

When journalists gather in the pub or in the coffee house they talk shop, like all professionals do. The journalist's shop talk, however, has a certain amount of romance, adventure and an aura of charisma which most other professions lack. Part of this comes from within the profession itself but a great deal of it comes also from the "consumers" of journalism whose own attachment to the newsmen and reporters of their choice is generally an intense one. However, as every journalist knows - and most of his fans do not - a great deal of hard work and pragmatic decisions go into the production of a newspaper, or a magazine or a broadcast or a film. This hard work and decision-making revolve around the myriad factors involved in the process of collecting, collating and disseminating of information and ideas. In all of the mass media the economics of the medium also play a rôle which is little understood not only outside of the medium but also within.

However, the stories about journalism and journalists are so interesting and so colourful that it is perhaps a shame that sometimes one tends to forget that reality is quite far removed from such romanticism. Journalists may continue to need the compensation that such romanticism lends them, to be able cheerfully to handle the frustrations of reality.

This is particularly so today since journalism has itself evolved, over the last few decades, into a much bigger, more systematic and also more competitive vocation. It has also taken upon itself, by and large, a greater responsibility towards society. And society has been making even greater demands on journalism. We are using the word "journalism" today to include all the mass media, the press, radio, television, film, etc., whereas formerly it referred only to newspapers and magazines. However, the inadequacy of the word journalism to describe the activities and concerns of today's "journalist" is already beginning to relegate that word if not quite into oblivion, certainly into describing only a part of the communication process in society. The new phrase is "mass communication", and even some of the older journalists are beginning to call themselves communicators in certain contexts. As such contexts are progressively increasing, especially because of the growing activities sponsored by universities, by professional organizations, by national governments, by international organizations, etc., the more common reference now is to "mass communication" or "the mass media" than to "journalism". In this transistory stage, however, definitions of "journalism" and definitions of "mass communication" vary. For purposes of this discussion we might perhaps more conveniently define journalism as the business of collecting, managing, editing and disseminating news and information through one or another mechanical device. We might perhaps then define mass communication as the study of the process involved in such utilization of such mechanical devices for such news and information, and the flow of those messages through society.

Journalism, according to Webster, is: "the business of managing, editing, or writing for journals or newspapers; also, journals or newspapers collectively". Such a definition was an adequate word for describing the media in the days when most mass communication was carried on by newspapers and magazines. And such a period lasted a long time. The first mechanical device by which man could share his thoughts with a large number of people, was the printing press. The birth of British journalism, for example, can almost be dated back to 1476 when William Caxton set up the first press at Westminster. Actually, however, the emergence of a regular periodical devoted to the dissemination of news came only over a hundred years later. But what we have come to know as the newspaper had forerunners in the form of "broadsides" and pamphlets. The delay was due to the unavailability of facilities for the gathering and distribution of news. Literacy too was not widespread and not everyone could afford to buy these news sheets. There were also political reasons which made printing a somewhat risky occupation. One might add that such factors as illiteracy

and economic restraints continue to act as obstacles to newspaper growth even today in large parts of the world.

The development of printing occurred alongside industrialization and in fact printing itself was part of that process of industrialization since it brought workers together under one roof and substituted the machine for a task which was once done by hand. It also succeeded in reproducing, relatively inexpensively, identical items by mechanical means; this was mass production.

The printed medium held its lonely sway over a long period of time and it continued to be the only means by which cultural, social, economic and political allegiances could be maintained over large areas. It performed the functions which today's society expects all the media of communication to perform and to share. These are: to inform and broaden the horizons of the public, to interpret events and issues, to criticize, and when necessary, challenge authority, to act as a "watchdog", to entertain and to assist in selling goods and services by bringing buyers and sellers together.

The "communication revolution" came in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and brought with it the motion picture, the radio and later - much later - television. "Journalism" thus became only one part of this wider network of mass communication media.

FUNCTIONS OF THE MEDIA

Apart from the increase in the number of the media, there was also a gradual but distinct change in the functions of the media which made journalism too restricted a term to describe this bigger world of communication. There has been a tremendous increase in the various types of public relations activities, of advertising, of house organs, in short of all forms of persuasive communication. A great deal of the early contributions to the study of mass communication, in fact, came from the propaganda activities during World War II and from advertising. Only later did social scientists, coming from various disciplines such as political science, sociology and psychology, begin to study the media in their "natural" situation and for their own sake. Today, because of the greater interest in mass communication in the developing countries and communities, anthropologists are also increasingly contributing their services to the study of mass communication.

With such developments having taken place and continuing to take place, it has therefore become not only more stylish but also more accurate to talk of mass communication rather than of journalism, when referring to all media and not merely to newspapers and magazines. It may indeed be more correct to say that journalism is part of mass communication. For, as in the other media of mass communication, newspapers and magazines too utilize mechanical devices and have become institutionalized - that is a whole institution becomes the message carrier whether it is a broadcasting station or a film studio or a newspaper or a magazine.

All these require a large group of people bringing their own specialities to their tasks, working together to produce a product which is then carried to thousands or millions of persons almost simultaneously. The media units work as social institutions each having its own controls, inside and out, its economic concerns, its ethical codes, etc. These various media, as branches of mass communication, are all more or less in the same business of collecting and disseminating information and knowledge.

It should be noted, however, that there are differences - and some very distinct differences - between the various media. We shall deal with this later. Suffice it to point out that mass communication does not mean communication for every one. Even in a given medium, mass communication is selective because the medium is selective. Each of the media tends to select its audiences, and audiences likewise select among and within the media.

As social institutions the mass media are (or ought to be) responsive to the environment in which they operate. This interaction between the media and their societies, it will be seen, means that not only do the media influence the social, economic, cultural and political structures within which they operate but that in turn they are themselves influenced by them. Therefore to understand mass communication properly one must understand the society in which the media exist. And to understand that society one must have a clear picture of its values and basic beliefs. This means that a knowledge of history, sociology, psychology, etc., is necessary for a true understanding of the media. Today the training of journalists attempts to provide such a background. This is sometimes done by professional organizations which run short-term training courses for working journalists who can neither afford the time nor have the inclination to sit through long courses leading to a degree in a university. However, the new recruits to journalism and to other media are increasingly coming from universities where the better schools of journalism and/or communication are providing such a background in their regular curriculum, in addition to imparting basic knowledge of the techniques of production in one or more of the media. Although the students may concentrate in later stages of their course work on the techniques involved in a specific medium, they are primarily exposed to a broader outlook on all the media within various social, political, economic and cultural frameworks.

The change from journalism to mass communication has also slowly but surely occurred in educational institutions and many of the old departments of journalism have redesignated themselves in the course of their expansion into departments or schools of journalism and communication.

THE "BORN" JOURNALIST

Since the printed medium was the obvious and virtually the only avenue for employment in the past, schools of journalism concentrated largely on meeting the demands of newspapers, although this demand was very slow in coming and continues to be slow in some parts of the world. Gradually, however, at least in some countries (the United States is a leading example), the schools of journalism succeeded in proving themselves and also succeeded in proving that a professional education was better than mere technical training, especially technical training provided "on the job" in newspapers or in broadcasting stations. Such training is now being reorganized as at best a slow process and at worst extremely limited and often confining, offering little opportunity for advancement to the average reporter or sub-editor. No school of journalism, however, claims that it turns out the "complete" journalist. But they do claim that they turn out better recruits to the profession of journalism than the old relatively less educated and totally untrained entrants into journalism whose claim to being journalists was based on birth rather than on training. The old adage that journalists are born and not trained is all but dead. As Joseph Pulitzer who got into trouble for daring to suggest that a journalist was educated and not born, once quipped: "the only position that occurs to me which a man... can successfully fill by the simple fact of birth is that of an idiot".

At least in some parts of the world, therefore, the fight for recognition which the schools of journalism have fought, has been won. The newer journalists tend to be better educated and better trained. They have a good background of the humanities and are knowledgeable in the social sciences. Increasingly editors and publishers, and executives of broadcasting networks are preferring to recruit young people who have a degree from a school of journalism. This is also true in such related fields as market research, public relations, advertising, government information services, etc. Soon, it may not be enough for a potential journalist to have a broad background in the humanities and the social sciences, for we are on the threshold of the age of specialization. The general reporter is increasingly being forced to give way to the science writer, the economic writer, the political correspondent, the specialized columnist, the women's page editor, the sports writer, etc., within each medium, not to speak of the specializations across the media.

Such developments have brought in their wake, discussions on whether journalism can now be called a profession, since a profession is distinguished by the fact that it needs specialized training and a formal recognition of that training by a group of qualified "teachers". Without entering the discussion itself in any depth, it seems that such an agreement is well on its way to being reached, at least informally, among the various clashes of media practitioners as well as on the part of educators and the general public. This is all to the good since the journalist is bound to benefit through an elevation of his own stature. This includes newspapermen as well as "electronic journalists", a term made popular by Eric Sevareid, the American television commentator. The trend is especially evident in the fact that a number of professional organizations have been formed with specialists of their own (such as newspaper editors, publishers, broadcasters, photographers, "working journalists", etc.), whose representatives often get together in national and international conventions to discuss problems of common concern. Recently representatives of universities, not only from schools of journalism, but other departments as well, have been able to join such organizations as full members or associates and international organizations such as Unesco, have increasingly been able to bring scholars and practitioners together since such organizations have always worked closely with all of them.

USE IN EDUCATION

It may also be worth pointing out that today one talks freely not only of education in journalism but also of journalism in education. A give and take between educators and journalists has brought about the new trend of the use of mass media in education - perhaps the best justification for the closest relationship being established between the media practitioner and the educator. This close relationship, or the need for it, has been extended beyond the administrators of formal education to administrators of out-of-school education, which in its broad sweep, includes such vast educational efforts as those in the field of health, agriculture, family planning, community development, literacy, business management, and finally administration itself. National and international planning bodies have found the need for the contributions of journalists and communication personnel of all kinds to be built in, as integral components, into all forms of developmental activities within the broad concept of social change and of modernization.

No practitioner needs to have any further confirmation of the recognition of his importance to society. The challenge has been made. And it had been made in a proportion which is awesome in its dimensions. Whether he will be able to meet this challenge or not depends on his own ability to comprehend and to come to grips with the vast problems of the big world which exists outside the newspaper office or of his broadcasting station. If he wants to do so he must have a fuller understanding of himself, of his medium and of the world outside. In other words, the communicator, the medium and the audiences. Such knowledge used within the social context in which he operates should make him a more effective communicator.

CHAPTER II

THE PROCESS OF INFORMATION FLOW

We might as well begin by saying that the practice of mass communication is difficult. This is despite the fact that man has been communicating, in one way or another since pre-historic times. In our present discussion, we are particularly concerned with mass communication which is in many ways different from interpersonal communication. We know that interpersonal communication is complicated. Mass communication is perhaps even more complicated. In interpersonal communication, since we are extremely concerned about ourselves, we do put a great deal of effort into watching the reactions of the person we are talking to and into correcting ourselves to the best of our ability whenever we make a mistake or whenever we realize that whatever we are saying is not being understood or not being received in quite the way we want it to be received. We may correct ourselves either by retreating or by clarifying or perhaps even by apologizing.

Those of us who practise mass communication, on the other hand, generally do not have an opportunity for such immediate "feedback" of reactions from our audiences. Therefore, we have little opportunity for keeping up a healthy dialogue and even less opportunity to retreat or clarify or apologize. Most of the time even if we would like to do so, it is far too late. Hence in any effort on our part to ensure that our practice of mass communication is achieving what it sets out to achieve, a great deal of preparation must go into it before we begin to communicate. Fortunately, unlike in the interpersonal situation, there is time for such preparation. The feedback may not be immediate, but it can be obtained if we are willing to put in the effort to obtain it. Moreover considerable information is already available to the practitioner of mass communication in the body of knowledge gathered patiently, even if sometimes haphazardly, by mass communication researchers. Exposure to such knowledge can itself be a form of preparation. This is as true for newspapers dealing with their formidable deadlines as it is for radio and television broadcasters and for film-makers and equally important, administrators of mass communication campaigns, especially in developing countries.

For any systematic approach to the practice of mass communication, the communicator must have a certain amount of knowledge of himself, his particular medium and his audience, in other words, the total process of communication. A practitioner may be an excellent technician and a highly skilled professional, but without an understanding of the process of communication, he would be less of a professional than he would himself like to be.

SIMILARITIES

It should first of all be noted that mass communication channels are always operating side by side with interpersonal channels and that the two interact very closely and each is exerting an influence on the other. Although we have drawn a distinction between mass communication and interpersonal communication with a view to setting our own boundaries we should also recognize that there are many similarities between the two. In both situations the communicator has to gain attention, has to be understood, has to be accepted, has to be interpreted and has to succeed in bringing about some kind of a change in attitude and behaviour. Of course not all mass communication or all interpersonal communication goes through all these steps. A considerable proportion of straight news items, for example, are read or listened to and immediately forgotten or stored away for future retrieval.

The interaction between mass communication and interpersonal communication is both constant and cumulative. While a great deal of content from mass communication forms the grist of interpersonal communication, it is also natural that subjects discussed in the interpersonal situation (a summit meeting, or a church group) finds its way inevitably into the mass media. Each therefore feeds on the other and affects the other. It is not a one-sided cause-and-effect relationship.

Since our concern here is with mass communication we will look at interpersonal communication as related to mass communication from the point of view of the practitioner of mass communication, but will try to keep in mind the important rôle of other forms of communication from which the practitioner of mass communication cannot separate himself, whether in his day-to-day work or within the context of his ultimate objectives.

A RELATIONSHIP

Communication essentially is a relationship - a relationship between the person who is imparting a message or sending out a signal and the receiver of such signals. Obviously they must use some common signals to be able to communicate at all.

For the practitioner of mass communication, the important things to consider are that he has something to communicate, that he has a channel (or medium) through which he can convey his message and that there is an audience which hopefully will receive that message because there is interest in it. It will be noticed that we have defined "communication" and expanded it, for the purposes of the practitioner to "mass communication" and in doing so have brought in the additional factor of the "channel" or the "medium" - because this has a crucial bearing on the difference between communication and mass communication. In addition, mass communication involves a complex corporate organization, an extensive division of labour and a great deal of expense.

Without complicating this distinction any further, let us merely say that the difference between communication and mass communication is that while the first includes interpersonal communication as a distinct component, to the average practitioner of mass communication, this becomes secondary because the practitioner of mass communication virtually loses control of his message once it gets into the interpersonal situation. His message may be discussed immediately after say, a person watches a television programme. But from that moment on the television set itself is most likely turned off and what happens in the living room between two or more individuals is beyond the control of the programme director or of the news analyst. He has either communicated effectively or he has not. Only time and research can perhaps tell.

Often broadcasting networks and newspapers insist that they do have feedback because their listeners and readers write letters commenting upon some item of news or information and the way they were handled. But researchers have conclusively shown that such feedback can be very misleading. Because those who write these letters are a particular breed of readers and listeners and they do not represent the total audience of mass communication. Very often the so-called feedback is confined to the comments made by the communicator's own colleagues. Needless to say, such feedback is perhaps even worse and even more limited than the letters or telephone calls.

What do we mean when we say that communication is based on a relationship between the sender of a message and its receiver? In the interpersonal situation this is easily grasped. But what about the mass communication situation? It means that when a man picks up a newspaper or tunes in to his favourite television programme, he does so with certain expectations of achieving a certain relationship. He expects the communicator, whatever the medium, to talk a certain language and talk about certain subjects and he expects to understand what is being said. If he does not find his expectations fulfilled and does not achieve satisfaction, that relationship will break.

To understand what this means, one need only ask a villager in a remote Indian village why he does not listen to the radio. Chances are that the villager's reply would be "It speaks a strange language" or "I'm not interested in what it says". Obviously it is not the radio set that he is complaining about; it is the commentator, even if he expresses his relationship in terms of the medium rather than the communicator or the specific message. Perhaps this is the sense in which Marshall McLuhan talks about the medium being the message. It is doubtful, however, that a more sophisticated listener will refer to his relationship quite the same way.

To get back to our discussion on the process of communication, there are many events from which the communicator selects a few to be conveyed to his audience. He writes these stories as best as he can and fixes them in a time-slot or a news hole. A receiver then selects from among the material presented, pays attention to some messages, interprets them and disposes of them as he likes. But the messages and the medium have brought the communicator and the receiver together.

SELECTION

The process, however, while simple in some respects, is highly complicated in others. Let us take a day-to-day example of a news agency sending out tens of thousands of words over the wires into a newspaper office or a broadcasting station. In its own way the news agency is trying to cater to a specialized audience which in its case are its subscribers. But the subscribers are not using all of the material. They have their own special interests and special needs and above all they have their own special problems which severely restrict them. A newspaper has only so many columns; a broadcasting station has only so much time to devote to the news agency's material. The typical news editor picks some stories and lets them in; the rest he "spikes" and keeps out.

The process continues through the chief sub-editor and the sub-editor and finally the man who makes up the page on the "stone". They are trimming the stories. All of them are acting as "gatekeepers".

This concept of the gatekeeper rôle of the communicator is an extremely important one in understanding the process of communication. The average practitioner can see what this does to the whole concept of "objectivity" even without going beyond the purely informational content of mass communication into the persuasive parts of mass communication (such as editorials, news analysis, features, documentaries with built-in messages, etc.) After the newspaper is put to bed and after the newscast ends the process of selection still continues. In the case of the newspaper as well as in broadcasting and films, there are distribution problems and beyond that there is the audience. There is one kind of a gatekeeper or another throughout the process. Therefore, from the start of the process to the ultimate end (we shall see how there is perhaps no such ultimate end) the amount of effective communication is progressively getting smaller and smaller and therefore only a fraction of the total communication in society get any real hearing at all.

If we assume that one of these messages has indeed reached a reader or a listener then what happens? It enters the social networks which are made up so much of interpersonal communication. The particular item may now be discussed and passed on. It is possible too that in some form, it may even come back to the original source, and be put back into the communication system in some similar or different form. The circle is now complete and the original information becomes part of the experience of society. But while it has obviously touched some, it has not touched others at all.

"NOISE"

In the process of transmission, a message may become contaminated. This concept is usually called "noise", a term which comes from electronics (we have all experienced it on a telephone, for example, where we sometimes do not hear distinctly or even correctly). But in mass communication this need not be actual physical noise. A message may be contaminated because it has not been understood properly and therefore in travelling further within the communication system it can be misinterpreted and lose all resemblance to the original message. It may become rumour or gossip or counter-propaganda. This is the reason why the practitioner of mass communication cannot be overcareful in constructing and in disseminating his original message. The more complex the subject-matter, the more simply and more accurately it needs to be handled.

Once the message is received, social relationships can also play a great part in how it is received. We are all members of some groups which are relevant to us and whose value systems and beliefs we subscribe to. Therefore, when a message enters such a group, what happens to it is guided to a large extent by the group's beliefs and value systems. More often than not the message is not accepted at its face value. It is checked with other members of one's group. For example, a farmer who listens to a broadcast about a new fertilizer or a new plough, is more than likely to check with other farmers before attaching any value to the message and before deciding to try the new fertilizer. The message will have to stand this test. Most of the research done on "diffusion of innovations" has had to deal with the study of these processes.

Apart from small groups, communication also has to meet the requirements and deal with the norms of the society at large. In most societies there are some strongly held beliefs and traditions and generally a way of doing things. The communicators are themselves part of this society and therefore their own messages will also be guided to a large extent by these norms and by these practices. The tendency therefore is to work within those practices. The implications of this for international communication and inter-cultural communication are obvious. Unless some of the more common terminology and the more common value systems are taken into consideration, the message cannot travel very far, and if it does, can be so easily misunderstood.

An additional factor in communication which should be recognized by the practitioner has to do with the message itself. The meaning of a message is not necessarily wholly in the words that it contains. There can be a great deal of information outside of them. Much like the word "yes" may be accompanied by a shrug of a shoulder or a smile or a certain tone of voice. It is the totality which makes the message. In the case of mass communication, this would obviously be affected by whatever characteristics are specific to a given medium. In the case of a newspaper it may be the type-face, its size, the headline itself, the position on the page, etc. It may also include a by-line which may tell the reader a great deal (or nothing at all). In the case of the radio, of course, the speed of reading, the quality of the tone of voice, etc.

HEAD START

The factors mentioned in this discussion are the ones to look for but in specific societies they will work in specific ways and this is important. Practitioners of mass communication, by the very nature of their experience, will necessarily have a head start but to reach that finish line they invariably need a little assistance from the communication researcher. It is the latter's task to provide the practitioner with that little extra which he needs.

The researcher cannot do so by basing his knowledge entirely on the literature he exposes himself to - often from societies outside his and the practitioner's own. This is especially true of the developing countries where the practitioners and the administrators of mass communication want to do so much and yet have so little to go on. This includes their knowledge of the communication process in their own society.

In the succeeding chapters we shall be discussing the nature of specific components in the communication process. These are: the communicator, the channels and the audience. The characteristics of each one of these, of course, will have a bearing on the process and finally on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a given message and a given medium. Our discussion of the process itself has, therefore, necessarily been brief. The reader is invited to go through the following chapters to complete the picture for himself - based on his own knowledge of his own particular community.

CHAPTER III

THE COMMUNICATOR

It has been estimated that as many books were published in the last 25 years as in the 500 years before 1950, and that perhaps 90% of all scientists and technologists who have ever lived are alive and working today. In the United States it is believed that there are more people engaged in providing knowledge to the public than all the farmers and industrial workers put together. The communicator is king. Or is he?

As Wilbur Schramm put it "technically, what has happened in the last five centuries is that man has developed some remarkable machines that can be inserted into the communication process to duplicate a message, and to extend almost indefinitely a person's ability to see and hear and record, and thus to share, information. The communication process (however) remains basically the same. The psychology of communication is basically the same... But because man lives by information, this new ability to share it, has had a profound effect upon human life."

It cannot be denied that communication in such vast dimensions has brought about fundamental social changes. The news sheet and later the electronic media have made it possible for large numbers of people everywhere to be informed about politics and therefore to participate in government.

The locus of power has moved from hereditary leadership to an informed and intelligent leadership. It has also been suggested that without channels of mass communication the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century could not have transformed our way of life as it did.

The advent of television, as it has been clearly shown, has brought about impressive changes in living habits in the more industrialized countries. Communication has now been clearly recognized as the fundamental social process and major changes in human communication have always accompanied major social changes.

This relationship between communication and social change can be seen most sharply in some of the developing countries which are just moving from an older culture into a media culture. In such countries the process of communication development has been tremendously shortened because of the availability of new media and of communication technology.

In the midst of such change, where does the communicator fit? What are his rights, privileges and responsibilities? How is he presently doing his job and how can he do better? Let us first look at the available potential and then see if communication research has some suggestions to offer.

Thanks to communication technology, media practitioners and administrators of government developmental campaigns are now able to take new concepts into the hitherto isolated villages faster than if the villages continued to be dependent on traditional and mainly oral channels of communication. Their messages may involve the use of a new fertilizer or a new method of cultivation, the need for vaccination or the need to restrict the size of one's family. They may also involve the explanation of what elections are all about. In this vast "education" process an increasing amount of power passes from the older wise men whose claim to power was exclusive knowledge of the past and into the hands of informed men who now command knowledge of the outer world and of new ways of doing things for the benefit of all. Such a process gains momentum fairly fast and social change occurs at increasingly rapid speed.

Such a process of change, however, needs very often to perhaps be slowed down somewhat or diverted into specific channels in order to prevent any unhealthy developments. One of the essential ingredients in bringing about a smooth changeover is again communication. Accurate information provided by trustworthy communicators and through credible channels becomes imperative. The rôle of the communication practitioner and the administrator of communication campaigns, therefore, becomes extremely important.

For, among the things that mass communication can do are some inbuilt dangers. These have been usually summed up in the phrase "revolution of rising expectations". While it is true that the phrase refers especially to the economic aspects

of social change, it nevertheless covers other changes as well. For example, while initial communication can "sell" a new fertilizer or a new contraceptive device, those who adopt such new practices may be disappointed as a result of overenthusiasm. Such disappointment can percolate into a community through oral channels if the communication networks are not geared to handle such situations. Only accurate information can squelch the repercussions of unhealthy rumour mongering. The same thing is true in other areas of human behaviour which mass communication is capable of affecting. These range all the way from entertainment to selling a bar of soap and from providing education to intervening in political campaigns, from speculating on prices to discussing religion. The opportunities for doing good or bad are literally infinite. The vast networks in mass communication which have been built in such countries and which themselves are picking up increasing speed in the whole process of change are also becoming complex. The average person is overwhelmed by such complexity, because often he is not in a position to fully grasp the mechanics of bringing out the daily newspaper or a television programme or a feature film or even a book.

"GATEKEEPERS"

In this whole process of a flow of information and the transmission of knowledge communication practitioners act as powerful gatekeepers of knowledge and therefore even of change. More often than not they are perhaps even unaware of what they do or do not do. They can withhold knowledge and they can add to knowledge and they can also interpret the available information. Therefore it is important for such communicators to fully understand their own rôle as well as their own strengths and their own weaknesses. They should also be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the channels which they control and operate and perhaps even more important the audiences whom they are out to serve, sometimes as mere transmitters, sometimes as watchdogs and sometimes as gods.

How does the communicator measure up to his task, especially at the present time with renewed challenges facing him? Needless to say, it is important that he should be conscious of his own strengths and weaknesses and his own preconceptions and needs. Only then can he either deliberately attempt to become detached or be aware of his intense involvement so that when he is dealing with a vast audience, he knows what he is doing and perhaps why.

Research has given us some indications of where the communication practitioner stands in this regard. Much of the research, of course, has inevitably concentrated upon the oldest practitioner of all - the newspaper journalist. However, the "electronic journalist" and other communicators will be able to recognize the similarities they may have with their colleagues of the print medium. The picture that has emerged out of studies focusing on the communicator is not a pretty one, but it is not a particularly ugly one either. We have already been aware for some time of our own limitations, even if we have not been able to admit this to ourselves, let alone to others outside of the profession.

Essentially, we practitioners of mass communication have been caught between the past, the present and the future. (In sociological terms this could be translated into "traditional mores, persistent folkways, and social change". But from now on we shall desist from using the researcher's language wherever possible.) The journalist has been the captive of a traditional social, political and cultural structure in his day-to-day work while at the same time faced with sometimes revolutionary changes taking place all around him, often in little doses but occasionally in big doses as well. Most of the time he has been a follower; occasionally he has been able to lead but always poised to step back if the going got too hard. Because generally to him journalism has been his bread and butter and not, as in the case of scholars and philosophers, an occasional leap into the unknown. The journalist also has often had to fight for his own rights and privileges, as a member of society. Sometimes he has seen those rights and freedom temporarily or permanently abrogated. Sometimes traditional rôles have been taken away from him without new rôles being provided and he has had to fend for himself in the ensuing chaos.

A good example of this in the newly emerging nations is the almost exclusively political orientation of the journalist. Today, for such a journalist, the avenues are few, since he himself has not changed amidst all the changes that have taken place around him. The enemy (a colonial power) has withdrawn or been expelled and unless he finds new enemies to tackle, he is lost. He can now only fall back either on straight reporting of fires, accidents or speeches or criticise his own government and insist that all governments are a journalist's "natural" enemy. Therefore, in the new tasks of the new governments he has not been able to find a niche - unless he moved into the government himself. And many journalists have done just that. And those who did so find themselves in a completely different rôle - that of public relations men for governments or as practitioners in media controlled and operated by governments. The journalist who continued to work in newspapers found that somehow the sharpness of his nib was blunted, both because his own conscience would not permit him to be as blatantly critical as he used to be and even if he could that there was some lack of zeal and of appreciation. Partly as a result of the journalist's own inability to change and partly because of the new governments' own needs, the vast networks of communication utilized in the "constructive" aspects of communication for national development to bring about changes in society, began to be developed and operated by the governments. This

expansion of other media meant that the journalist had to find his own place side by side with other journalists and the situation became very confusing. New rôles were not defined and it could not even be simplified into a dog-eat-dog basis. Only time would sort out these rôles, but meanwhile there is a great deal of stress and professional disorientation and disorganization.

Even in the developed countries, although there have been no changes in governments (in the sense in which this occurred in the newly emerging nations) a vast expansion of media networks has taken place, and governments have had to take up new tasks, especially in the area of social welfare, in ecology, etc. The relationship between the journalist and the government has undergone some necessary changes, but not always smoothly.

Unfortunately much of the research done on the journalists comes from the more advanced countries. However, it would seem that a great deal of the conclusions perhaps apply universally.

The status of the journalist, for example, differs when viewed from his perspective and the perspective of his "public", that is society. There is evidence to show that since social change has been taking place and since the journalist has not been able to keep up with that change, either because he has not perceived it or because he is not willing to change, he has not been able, generally speaking, to modify his perceptions. This has affected his ability to communicate effectively. The implication of such a lack of change has had its necessary repercussions on himself as well as on society.

"IMAGE" OF JOURNALIST

There is a considerable body of literature which indicates that there are fairly distinct ways in which a journalist begins to achieve an image of himself and also how society has crystallized for itself an image of the journalist. The factors which go into the journalist's own assessment of himself are essentially based on his own membership group which is made up of news sources, the interaction with his colleagues in the news room, his relationship (or the lack of it) with higher status groups consisting of editors, publishers and chief executives of one kind or another. This process of socialization (or finding a comfortable niche for himself within the small group of the news room and the larger group outside of the news room), while bringing him closer to some people, has created social distance between himself, the news sources, the audience and often his own editor and publisher.

Research, in fact, has shown that journalists are unusually typical in their behaviour as a "pure" group. Their behaviour is guided, consciously and subconsciously, by traditional ways of doing things and by very strongly held beliefs and are subject to a great deal of internal pressures, and penalties.

A typical journalist group is small, intimate and cohesive, much like a family. Therefore its ability to shape him is very high. It has been shown that newsmen identify with each other very closely and refer to themselves in the plural as "we". They also limit their interaction with the outer world so as to strengthen their own in-group feeling. It is this last aspect that isolates the journalist a great deal and makes him unusually dependent upon his own group for psychological support as well as for material rewards.

Within the newsroom itself, a slow process of assimilation takes place of which the journalist is generally unaware. Since he himself has the strong urge to "belong" in his chosen group he develops a style of writing and handling stories generally by just watching how others do it. He may never be told what policy is, but he soon learns what he should avoid, even though if in fact he did not avoid it he may not be taken to task at all. Very often the policy of a newspaper, for example, is not dictated by the publisher but is unwittingly made by the ways in which stories are selected and "played" in the newsroom. Such selection and play are themselves based on traditional practices and the newsman's own "feelings" about his publisher or editor rather than by any specific instructions on what to play up and what to play down.

This subtle process of "socialization" has its effects on the journalist himself. Studies have shown that journalists show a strong need to control their environment, to avoid an open assumption of power and develop a strong sense of dependence. A newspaper is seen by them more as an instrument of control than as a vehicle for informing others. One researcher concluded that: the journalist is close to decisions without having to make them; he is in the presence of celebrities without having earned their companionship; and he is perceived by readers and news sources as a source of power whatever his real influence upon the newspaper and upon the reader.

For most journalists, it has been shown, the act of news writing provides an opportunity to please readers (perhaps their own colleagues) and gain their admiration and perhaps affection. It also gives them a sense of the power of words and the opportunity to censure and to punish.

STRESS ON INFORMALITY

Some of these generalizations coming out of research findings (which frequently surprised the researchers themselves) of course do not apply to every single journalist among journalists. However, the general pattern which emerges should be recognizable, whether it is in newspapers or in broadcasting stations, or in government information services. All that research has shown is that the journalist is as prone to the psychological and sociological stresses of organizational and social norms as any

other member of a society or of a bureaucracy. There is at least one difference, however, and this is in detail. Whereas in formal bureaucratic structures, personal relations are expected to be kept at a reasonable level of formality, among journalists the stress is more on informality. It is this that leads a journalist to treat his own colleagues much like members of his own family and depend on their support at the slightest sign of any external threat to himself or to any other member of his family.

There are obviously exceptions among newsrooms. Further research is called for to identify and isolate more of these individual factors such as differences in organizational structures, in cultural and traditional norms, etc. Until that is done, however, it might be useful for journalists to keep the conclusions of present research in mind and look at themselves and their own rôles at least a little critically.

One would like to be careful in making generalizations about newsmen and the uncomplimentary picture of them which emerges from research. However, there is indication, backed by systematic study, that journalists are leaving newspaper work because they perceive a lack of future in the field and because of their low prestige, poor leadership and comparatively low pay. There is a general dissatisfaction with opportunities for self-expression and for service to society. What is disturbing, says one researcher (Edelstein) is that those who are leaving are undoubtedly the most able, the most intelligent and the most mature psychologically.

Some of the frustrations which lead to such dissatisfaction have been identified and these are directly related to the newsman's day-to-day work. One researcher, after following reporters around their beats and interviewing them at the end of the day concluded that the reporters relied heavily upon "formula writing" and "formula news judgements". This meant that they relied upon writing technique as one way of avoiding the demands placed upon them by news sources, by editors and by readers. Although, by so doing they avoided criticism they got no self-satisfaction, nor did they feel that they had done a particularly praiseworthy job in the services of their own community. There was no sense of involvement, but only a "studied state of detachment". The journalist had no sense of being courageous, only safe.

Some of these characteristics of journalists which show up in their routine work, obviously affect the end product, in this case, the newspaper. Studies have shown that the tendency is for one newspaper to look like another, the other being, in a way, the object which is being emulated. Usually a smaller newspaper or a newer one tries to emulate a bigger and more established one. Where a cluster of newspapers exists in a single city, the tendency is to try and guess at what the other newspaper might do with a story, or a photograph. On such a guess often depends the final play that a story gets. Because of the in-group temperament of journalists to which we have already alluded, these guesses work fairly well. When they do not the editor might take his staff to task because he too looks at the other paper before deciding the "goodness" or "badness" of his own paper on that given day - another of the unseen forces towards conformity.

LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS

In the sociologist's way of looking at things what this means is that newspapers have their own "leaders" and "influentials" and just like people one newspaper tends to imitate another. It should perhaps be stressed again that no one is suggesting that all newspapers end up being equal. They cannot. There are leaders and there are followers. But the tendency of the average is to attempt to emulate the above average and this leads to unconscious (and often conscious) conformity. Add to this a journalist's desire for individuality and the resulting stress can often be quite intense.

Perhaps a journalist who wants to be individualistic can make a greater effort at identifying the points where forces of conformity seem to impinge upon him. He may try and create occasions when he can talk to his editor or publisher and sell an idea. Such efforts are usually not made; when they are, the chances are that a fresh idea will be received well. But if the journalist wants to play safe, he will continue to be an average member of an average community.

Another question which has occurred to researchers is whether a reporter's "anticipation" of reactions to his story influences his reporting or his writing? These reactions may be from his news sources or from his readers. Naturally, most reporters would deny such a possibility. However, studies do indicate that there are such influences at work. One of the main factors is, of course, the anticipated social contact with the source. Another is the status of the source.

On the other side of the coin, reactions of sources to reporters have also been investigated. It was found, in one study that physicians rated reporters relatively low in accuracy, in true perception of readers' needs and in the completeness of reporting. But the same physicians rated them high on craft-defined standards of human interest and timeliness. However, in this study the newsmen perceived themselves differently. They identified themselves with a "higher" group. In other words, the interesting conclusion was that the reporters rated themselves much more like physicians than physicians rated reporters like themselves. The physician, on account of the reporter's story, feared a reduction in his own status and

values as viewed by other physicians. But the reporter viewed his story as leading to an increase in his own status in the news room and among his readers.

Studies done on other aspects of the relationship between news sources and newsmen indicate that generally reporters are rated quite high on their accuracy, but only in so far as craft skills such as spelling, addresses, etc., are concerned but not in the meaning and values as expressed by the sources.

INSTRUMENTAL ROLE

The dangers inherent in such a complicated news source-reporter relationship have been expressed by some researchers who find that the relationships seem to be based more on social factors than on the intellectual. Often the journalist is given access to a higher socio-economic group and to an informal power structure "as a quid pro quo for his contributions to a formal structure". One of the reasons for this is of course that unlike in the past when a government on the one hand and the mass media on the other were expected to be two different things (before The Fourth Estate concept), each viewing the other with some amount of suspicion and jealousy, today the changes that have taken place because of the development of mass communication and of government, have forced a different kind of relationship. Governments want to be informed, at least in the more highly developed countries, about the public before taking or announcing governmental actions and decisions. Therefore the instrumental rôle of mass communication has been recognized and the mass media are often used as a tool of governments. This certainly leads to conflicts. It is a game at which two play. Both realize that there are advantages and there are disadvantages. If the game is played according to rule (and unfortunately there are no rules) both may stand to gain and as servants of society they may serve their own needs as well as society's better.

At least in some of the developing countries, without losing their "freedom" it has been possible for the media to work closely with governments in their efforts at bringing about social change and modernization. If by their ideological convictions the media, especially the newspapers, do not perform this partnership role effectively they automatically surrender the constructive aspects of their work as social institutions to governments. In such countries neither the governments nor the press can afford the luxury of internal bickering and of false professional pride or of power. Admittedly, the lines are hard to draw. They can only be drawn on the basis of the characteristics of a given situation and on the basis of a mutual recognition that each needs the other and that both are there for the higher purpose of serving society.

As James Reston has said, "The responsible government official and the responsible reporter... are not really in conflict ninety per cent of the time. When they do their best work, they are allies with one another... Clever officials cannot "manipulate" reporters, and clever reporters cannot really "beat" the government. From both sides, they have more to gain by co-operating with one another than by regarding one another as "the Enemy".

(In this section, we have confined our discussion to research on the communicator. Unfortunately, it is very limited - and almost exclusively on the newspaper journalist. For other aspects of the rôle of the communicator in the total process of information flow, especially regarding source credibility, the "gatekeeper" rôle, etc., the reader's attention is drawn especially to the chapters on the process of communication and on the effects of communication. In fact all the chapters deal with the communicator because after all, the discussion is about the practice of mass communication and it is the practitioner who practices it.)

CHAPTER IV

THE MEDIA AND THEIR AUDIENCES

The purpose of all communication is to reach an audience. In the case of the mass media these audiences, as we have seen, are usually large, heterogeneous and anonymous. The communicator does not really "know" them. At best he may have a hazy idea. He has a very little direct knowledge of either those who receive his messages or those who do not - in other words, his actual audience and his potential audience.

It should be safe to assume that every serious practitioner of mass communication would like (as Arthur Christiansen said he would) to know whom he is reaching and whom he is not. If he is reaching some people, what do they think of his presentations, how do they react, is he changing their attitudes, beliefs and perhaps, behaviour? If he is not reaching some people, why not? Is there anything he can do?

Research has some answers, largely tentative perhaps, but nevertheless worthwhile for practitioners to keep in mind. While most research, in the earlier stages, was essentially concerned with numbers (of those receiving the various media), lately the study of audiences has become extremely sophisticated. It has begun to classify audiences according to many demographical characteristics such as age, education, sex, income level, etc., and has begun to go deeper into the socio-psychological factors involved in peoples' attentiveness (or non-attentiveness) to the media, the special characteristics of specific groups within the larger audience, etc.

In this chapter, we have combined media and audiences for discussion together, because it would be difficult and unnatural to separate them. As we have said, the two are closely linked in a complicated relationship.

Generally, the word audience refers only to those who attend to a given medium or message. But since the practitioner would also like to know about those who do not receive him, let us try and discuss the media and their audiences in both these senses.

"OBSTINATE" AUDIENCE

For a long time it was widely assumed, not only by media practitioners or by laymen, but even by social scientists that if a message could be placed in the mass media, it would have great effect in influencing the audience. It was also assumed that the information contained in the mass media was carried directly to the audience. Continuing research has disproved both these assumptions, at least to the extent that such sweeping generalizations were totally erroneous.

The first set of these findings showed that the audience, by and large is "obstinate" - a term coined by Raymond A. Bauer and used extensively by scholars since. The second set of findings has shown that a considerable amount of the messages carried by the media in fact reaches an audience only indirectly, that is through other people - orally. Of course in this process of transmission there is scope for a great deal of distortion. The nature of the process of distortion is being studied carefully, but we shall not discuss it here. The important thing to remember is that, as Wilbur Schramm has said, the old "bullet theory", although laid to rest by researchers, is still making the rounds among media practitioners and their audiences. Many of them continue to believe that the audience is passive and that communication messages are directly shot at them.

Once it is recognized that the audiences are not passive and it is they in fact who reach out to the media of their choice, a very much different picture emerges. Briefly, it is that in this relationship between the media and its audiences, each is affected by the other. The media become objects for sale and the audiences are the buyers out to be wooed, but making up their own minds, guided by their own needs and directed by their own attitudes to reach out for the articles (and programmes) which interest them most.

It has also been shown that information then flows by word of mouth through social channels

and reaches even those people who had not reached out for any of the media in the first place.

These two major findings must make a great deal of difference to how the practitioner approaches his task. If he wants to reach a wide audience, does he project his message at the level of the common denominator or does he aim it only at those people who will expose themselves to the media in the first place and then hopefully pass it along to others? If indeed the practitioner does decide to aim his message at an élite audience only so as to reach them directly, what assurance does he have that his message will indeed disperse itself automatically within the wider society? If he gives a little thought to the mechanics of such a process, he will soon realize that a great deal must depend on the nature of the subject matter. Has the subject direct relevance to the daily life of an ordinary person; is the topic so specialized that only a few would be interested or can comprehend; is it an item of news which fits into the "frame of reference" of the average person and therefore comprehensible to him or is it a feature which would appeal only to a specific section of an audience such as women or children or youth? He may also ask himself whether he can more or less accurately predict the type of person who would be the carrier of his message once he or she has been reached by him.

"OPINION LEADERS"

A series of studies have shown that for each type of subject matter, such as politics, human interests, society news, sports, movie reviews, etc., there is a certain type of reader who usually makes it his or her business to be informed and then to pass on such knowledge among the groups that he or she mixes with. Such people then become the "opinion leaders" in that group for that particular subject. The opinion leader or influential who may be regarded as a trustworthy source when it comes time to vote is not necessarily given that privilege on a free evening when his friends decide to go to the movies. Here someone else's opinion may be valued. The same is true for other facets of human behaviour such as farming or religion or marketing. It is obvious then that each of these persons may also belong to a completely different socio-economic, age and educational level. Therefore, the style of presentation, and in the case of broadcast media, the timing must vary. Surely a farmer who may be the opinion leader in his own community as far as farming practices are concerned can be reached by a language and at a time which are far different from the manner in which a political leader may be reached or, for that matter, a movie fan, the last of whom, at least one study has shown, is probably a teenage girl.

One of the difficulties of media practitioners, it seems, is that many of them have only been trained (if at all) or have the ability to write or project themselves in only one style, a style which is common to themselves and their peers. Apart from the danger of not reaching a preferred audience at all, there are also the twin dangers of either insulting the intelligence of the target group by over-simplifying or that of going over their heads by being too erudite for that particular audience. Needless to say, a clearer understanding of the levels and interests of sub-groups within an audience must enable the communication practioner to do a more effective job. A great deal of research has been done to identify opinion leaders and influentials in given cultures and given communities. Of course cultures and communities vary. If specific studies have been done in a communication practitioner's own community, a knowledge of such studies would be most useful. If such studies have not been done, the practitioner has only two alternatives: either to get such studies done if he can or to arm himself with a deep understanding of the social patterns in his own community - community meaning not his peer group, but the vast world outside, consisting of his present and potential audiences.

It is also worth noting that there are differences among the "influentials" and "opinion leaders" in so far as their exposure to the media are concerned. In other words whilst some influentials are avid readers of newspaper, others spend more time listening to the radio or watching television or going to the movies. This knowledge is perhaps more useful to the administrator of mass communication campaigns rather than to the individual communication practitioner. Because, generally speaking, all the media would like to obtain as wide an audience as possible. The exceptions are the specialized publications and programmes. The administrator, however, will have to make decisions on allocations of limited resources to the dissemination of messages through various media. Leaving aside political or other considerations, from a purely professional and administrative point of view he will no doubt wish to know which of the media are more likely to reach the specific segments of the society in which a communication campaign is being mounted. Research is replete with examples of money wasted, whether it is on printing posters or on making expensive documentaries and even on buying space in newspapers.

Unfortunately such data on media use, in countries where it is most necessary, is not always readily available. In many countries, little attempt has been made to gather such data. But for the purpose of this discussion, merely to see how significant such differences can be to media practitioners as well as administrators of mass communication campaigns, we may look at some examples from some of the highly advanced countries.

MEDIA USE

Until a child learns to read, it has been found that the electronic media are dominant. After this the use of the printed media increases rapidly. As the child grows up, its media use is influenced greatly by the patterns of media used in the family. This is not only because the child cannot obviously use a medium which does not exist at home but also because the child is imitating the older members of the family. However, as he grows older he is influenced by the pattern of behaviour of his friends and school mates. Later, as he gets into higher classes in school he makes less use of the media and he begins to get more selective, because he is busier with homework and social activities. His selectivity may lead him away from the purely entertainment content of the media.

Among adults, television and newspapers rate high. Magazines come next, then movies and then books. The data on radio listening is somewhat sketchy.

Newspaper reading, in the United States, seems to rise to a peak in the 1940's and fall off slightly in later years. Magazine and book reading also seems to decline gradually in later years. It has also been found that people over 60 are active users of the mass media especially television, apparently because of their lessening social activity and participation in work groups.

Here are a few more broad generalizations, based on research findings:

1. Selection of serious and informative material rises with age and education;
2. Use of the print media also increases with education;
3. As the responsibilities of a person become heavier and the time he can devote to the media gets to be less, the more he turns to the printed media for informational material, especially towards the newspaper which is the most easily available. He also turns towards the more serious parts of the audio-visual media;
4. The entertainment parts of the media, however, do not undergo such changes. Most people continue to expose themselves to the audio-visual media for entertainment throughout their life span. But, as for the informational content, the bulk of the audience consists of people who are highly educated and who bear relatively heavy responsibilities in their daily work.

IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

At this point in our discussion it may be useful to take a closer look at the communication patterns in the developing countries, although as I've already indicated, the research evidence is relatively less. However, the experienced practitioner and administrator will be able to recognize the factors they will have to take into consideration in their own day-to-day work within their own communities.

1. However underdeveloped the mass communication networks may be in the developing countries, as compared to the more advanced countries, there are channels through which information can be carried to the rural population;
2. Considerable information is flowing through the presently available channels but full practical use is not being made of these channels for lack of adequate knowledge of them on the part of the practitioner and administrator,
3. There is considerable awareness of new practices and innovations but these are not being adopted owing to the lack of sustained and well directed information campaigns through the media as well as through interpersonal channels of communication;
4. What this means is that if communication is less effective than it can be, it is not so much because of lack of channels (although this can certainly be improved as well) but because of the lack of effective use of them;
5. One of the more important findings is that while channels for the flow of information from metropolitan centres to the rural communities is fairly high, as also the flow of directives from the higher to the lower units in the governmental and bureaucratic hierarchies, such information flow is lacking in the other direction. Therefore there is not only lack of feedback, but also a lack of fundamental knowledge of the needs and aspirations of the lower echelons. It is not only the administrator that can make more effective use of mass communication through such knowledge, but also the media practitioners themselves.
6. Most of the media practitioners belong to an élite, city-oriented group. The efforts on their part to appreciate the social and cultural milieu in which the vast majority of their potential audiences live has been very limited. Therefore their effectiveness remains limited - even as the size of their audiences;
7. While the mass media directly reach only a relatively small number of people in the villages (the radio is not doing too badly) the traditional media (mostly involving face-to-face communication) are disseminating all significant information on a fairly wide scale. News of important events, reaching the élite through the mass media, is relayed through the traditional channels fairly rapidly and adequately. But persuasive communication on developmental aspects has not been very successful. In other words, there is a distinct difference between communication of news of major importance and communication of knowledge and information relevant to behavioural change in such important subjects as health, education, family planning, community development, etc.

From the point of view of the practitioner and the administrator, what are some of the implications of such research conclusions? One is that in the context of rural development, mass communication

should aim at not only the transmission of information but should also attempt to arouse interest so that people are encouraged to experiment with new ideas and new innovations; that to be able to do this practitioners and administrators should make efforts to understand the needs and interests of the villagers; that once that is done the style and content of presentations should be matched with the needs, the interests and abilities of the villagers; that the practitioner and administrator must have a more complete knowledge of the communication networks in the villages, especially the rôle of the influentials and the information carriers and to do this they should encourage their field workers (correspondents and extension workers) to submit periodic reports on what they hear and what they see; that messages should then be tailored to these patterns.

In some ways this will mean that the copywriters, the announcers, the sub-editors, the filmmakers should relearn some of their techniques and this can only be done through training courses taught by not only "specialists" who base their lectures on textbooks or on their own limited (not in years but in exposure to field conditions) experience but also by field workers, correspondents, and researchers who have actually lived and worked in these communities.

LEVEL OF PRESENTATION

This also means that newspapers, broadcasting stations and film units must make efforts at "lowering" the level of their presentations which are now largely aimed for a "high class" audience in a "high class" style. They must also recognize that, in the final analysis, if they are to do a professional job as professional communicators, they will be judged not by their ability to communicate with their own peers (which comes easily and naturally) but with the less fortunate groups whose interests may be different, whose levels of understanding may be lower, but whose needs are far greater. Such a change among the practitioners and administrators is only possible if everyone in the communicator's hierarchy appreciates the need for such change. A sub-editor cannot make this change if he is afraid that a news-editor will take him to task for not writing a "smart" or a "bright" headline; a poster designer cannot effectively bring about such a change if the head of the publicity unit refuses to be satisfied with anything but a modernistic, sophisticated design, etc. The news-editor and the director of publicity will have to appreciate the needs of communication perhaps even more than the sub-editor and the poster designer. Perhaps both can take advantage of the researcher and the evaluator and their experiences in the field. An administrator will also like to have greater information on the relative effectiveness of the media - i. e. whether for a given audience radio is more effective than film or vice versa. While research does not as yet have a great deal to offer in this regard, it nevertheless has some but we shall deal with this in a later section. It may, however, be worth noting that in any large communication campaign a certain initial investment in research can pay high dividends. Whatever general guidelines there may be coming from research done elsewhere, may not hold true for the specific community which the administrator is out to serve - or to convince.

PURPOSIVE COMMUNICATION

Most communication can be considered to be purposive, although very often a communicator might insist that all he is doing is passing on information about some event or a person in public life or even perhaps dealing with a subject in feature style to merely clarify or expand. From his point of view he may be correct but the audience can often read some moral into a story. This is very much similar to a social situation where a person may pass on a piece of news with no conscious ulterior motive. However, another person in the group will remember something connected to that item of news and soon a discussion might ensue. In the discussion opinions will be expressed and perhaps an argument will soon replace an exchange of snippets.

In the mass communication situation, whether a person is exposing himself to an item of news or information, some "internal" discussion takes place within himself as long as the news is of immediate interest to him. An example of this might be a news item regarding the latest evidence of a relationship between cigarette smoking and cancer. The implications are clear, even if the news item itself can be described by the communicator as straight reporting. An item regarding a price increase may trigger general thoughts and feelings about inflation, the present government's policies and a whole host of attitudes may be activated. To that extent therefore most communication content can have unpredictable repercussions.

For the purposes of this discussion let us, however, deal with those items which the communicator consciously places within the network of communications to motivate and eventually bring about a possible change in behaviour which he considers necessary or beneficial.

The communicator here must start with a very clear idea of the ultimate goal and work his way backwards through the commitment or involvement that he desires, the kind of motivation he believes would bring about such a commitment, the type of information which he feels is necessary to activate such a motivation and finally the specific segment of the audience which he wishes to reach with that information. Once he has charted such a course mentally he is in a far better position to begin an effective process of communication. He may still fail, but at least he has brought a professional

approach to his work. His style of presentation would now be guided by his knowledge of the intellectual level of his target audience; his content will be based upon the issues and the arguments which he feels would motivate that audience to reach a certain commitment and then hopefully his ultimate goal will be reached.

To take our earlier example of smoking and cancer, if the communicator feels that he would like to write to a middle-aged audience, obviously his style of presentation and arguments would differ from another occasion when he might want to pitch his message to teenagers or to housewives or to cigarette manufacturers. It would be clear then that it may be better to reach specific audiences at specific times rather than dilute the message by combining all these segments of the audience and attempt to reach all of them with one long presentation. This will hold true for all media generally, although there may be specific cases when a general message may be equally effective. An example of this would be a short film shown prior to a family feature film. In such a case the communicator may expect certain internal pressures to work on various members of a family; for example, a child asking its father to stop smoking (and this can be an effective pressure indeed) or a family may discuss the whole issue when they go home and take a joint decision.

But if a film on a new fertilizer is shown under similar circumstances to a city audience the effects will perhaps be negligible. The wastage here can be enormous. With some prior planning based on such "commonsense" thinking on the part of an administrator, a great deal of such wastage can be avoided. Perhaps there is no specific research to back such thinking. It would be worthwhile to get it done - even if it merely confirms a hunch. A great deal of research has done just that. On the other hand, a great deal of research has also disproved the rightness of "commonsense" decisions.

SOURCE CREDIBILITY

From the point of view of the audience, the practitioner and the administrator will also have to think of another extremely important factor - that of source credibility. This depends very much again on the characteristics of a given audience.

To take our example of the film on fertilizer, the producer will perhaps ask himself if he should interview somebody. But should this be an "export" or a simple farmer who has tried the fertilizer himself. What kind of a farmer? Somebody with whom his audience can identify itself or a leader whom they particularly respect. But then if this leader is a big farmer, will the audience, composed of small farmers, reject the fertilizer as something which only "big people" can afford? Audiences can be unpredictable - until we find out why they react one way or another. Only then can we avoid costly mistakes.

Thirty years ago there was a classic example of such a mistake (fortunately avoided in time) in a film which was made as part of an anti-malaria campaign in a developing country. A good proportion of the film was devoted to the identification of the infection carrying mosquito, a still of which was blown up to fill the screen. The audience's reaction was one of complete unconcern. When they were questioned in depth they responded by saying that they had no such problem and whatever mosquitoes they had were much smaller ones! Very often it is not possible for a communicator, however professionally competent, to remove himself completely from his own milieu and put himself in the place of a typical member of the audience he is attempting to reach. Often the only way is to bring that typical member into his studios or to go out into that audience with his prototype before producing that product on a big scale. This is known as "pre-testing".

NATURE OF APPEAL

The purposive communicator will also ask himself what kind of an "appeal" will work with his audience. His first concern may be, for example, whether he should appeal to a parent as a parent or as a member of a responsible citizenry; he may then ask himself whether he should use a fear appeal and if so at what intensity. For it has been shown that with certain kinds of audiences a highly intense fear appeal is less effective than a medium-level appeal. We shall have more to say about this in a later section.

At this point of the state of knowledge, no researcher will give clear cut answers to many of these questions. But the point that is being made is that a certain thinking is imperative in the practice of communication. This step-by-step approach is what the researcher is trained to take and it is the kind of approach that many untrained practitioners follow almost intuitively. But for every such a practitioner there are perhaps a hundred others who do not. And professional training does not always include such discussions, merely because the top level practitioners who instinctively are able to plan their communication neither have the time nor often the ability to train younger practitioners in this fashion.

Many of us have no doubt seen highly avant garde presentations of films whose content is obviously meant for a lay audience. One example which comes immediately to mind is a Marcel Marceau-type pantomime film aimed at the illiterate and semi-literate rural population of a developing country! The obvious question which would occur to a professional administrator is whether this film was pre-tested before hundreds of copies were made for simultaneous showing all

over the country. If the pre-test had shown a lack of reaction or worse, a negative reaction, it would obviously have been better to scrap the particular piece of work than compound an error manyfold.

One can easily see how in every medium the tool of pre-testing can be adopted. If a newspaper, for example, wishes to start a new feature or a column or even attempt to restructure the whole paper, it would be worthwhile getting the reactions of a small segment of its typical audience. Many successful recent productions and publications began that way. Many more have failed because they did not do so.

WHY THE MEDIA ARE USED

The development of mass society and of higher rates of urbanization have brought with them certain changes in the organization and content of the mass media. Perhaps a fuller discussion of this development from the point of view of the audience will give us a clearer picture of what it is that the reader or viewer expects from the media to which he exposes himself.

One of the important effects of the changes that have taken place in society has been called "democratization" of the content of the media. Newspapers, magazines and books once addressed themselves only to a small circle of education and well-to-do readers. (In some of the developing countries this is unfortunately still true to a lesser or greater degree.) But as the base of political power, economic well-being and education expanded, the audience, or the potential audience for the media also spread from the élite to the population at large. The printed media began to gear their contents to the tastes of this wider audience and also reduce their prices. In most parts of the world, movies, radio and television arrived only after the democratic movement had already taken place. Therefore they appealed to a mass audience from the start. To a large extent the tastes and interests of that wide audience determined the content of the media.

Needless to say, technological development assisted the media in making it possible for them to produce their product in vast numbers and to distribute them over large areas. But, of course, such large operations needed large investments. Among the major sources for such investments have been subsidies by governments, political parties, labour, industry, etc.; advertising; and the customer who generally pays not merely the cost of production but also an additional amount to give the owner a profit. There remain, however, media units which do not make a profit but are supported for other reasons by one or more of the interested groups already mentioned. But the fact remains that for whatever reason, economic, political or any other, the customer had to be wooed and therefore his needs and interests had to be taken into account.

What are some of these needs and interests? The common belief that people read newspapers to be informed, or watch television for entertainment or go to the movies for relaxation, turns out to be over-simplification. While it is true that people read to become informed, they do so for different reasons: some to be in contact with their society and their environment, some to escape boredom, some to achieve prestige and some to find reassurance for their behaviour and to adjust to their rôles in society.

Studies done during newspaper strikes in New York, for example, came up with some interesting conclusions; the newspaper plays several rôles.

VARIED NEEDS

To some readers it is important in its traditional rôle as a source of information and ideas about serious public affairs. Other readers are apparently less interested in the content itself than in the use to which they put it - which is essentially to bolster their own ego by appearing informed in conversations with other people. In other words it is a source of social prestige. Some readers find it an indispensible tool in the routine of daily living, as for example, advertisements for local stores, radio, television and movie schedules, stock market reports, weather forecasts, fashion tips, etc. Readers also use the newspaper for social contact because it enables them to keep up with the latest gossip and social events; to keep in touch with one's neighbours as it were. At least one reader remarked that the newspaper "makes up for the lack of knowing people". For some it is an escape from their every day world, from the cares, problems and boredom of daily routine into a world where things are happening. The newspaper becomes a "socially acceptable form of escape". One researcher concluded that it is a source of security in an insecure world and that reading the newspaper has become for many people a "ritualistic or near-compulsive act".

Most of the regular readers, during the strikes, turned to radio as their chief source of news and to television as a poor second but they could not really take the place of the daily paper. It had become a habit, and even though their daily routine was scarcely disturbed by the lack of newspapers they did express "a distinct feeling of loss".

From such research the newspaperman can get an idea of what it is that is expected from him and even more important a sense of his own importance to society. Obviously, it is not enough if he keeps his public informed about the latest events. Such hard news and serious public issues form only one part of his expected rôle. He and his medium are expected to do a great deal more. Among the more important tasks are to provide his audience that

contact which they need with their environment in their day-to-day chores, in their constant need for reassurance and to enable them to adjust to their rôles in society.

LEADERSHIP ROLE

The lesson is therefore fairly clear that in a changing society the public expects newspapermen to provide not only guidance but also leadership of a constructive kind. In the developing countries this is apparently an even more important rôle than in the more advanced countries. A whole host of subjects are new to a vast majority of the population in these countries, whether it is vaccination or schooling or family planning or inflation or ecology. If the newspapers are unable to perform these functions, the public will necessarily have to look elsewhere, perhaps to other media, perhaps to the vast network of government information services attached to the various ministries concerned, perhaps to political and social leaders at various levels and even perhaps to members of their own small ill-informed communities. If newspapers allow themselves to be left behind, they will be left behind. This, if and when it occurs, will be bad not only for newspapers and newspapermen, but also for society.

But what about the other media? What do people expect from them? There is no comparable research as in the case of newspaper strikes. But other kinds of research have been done and there are some answers. The broadcast media afford social contact, advice in daily living, escape from boredom, etc. They also provide information, but information does not rate high. Those who do expose themselves to news programmes, for example, do so essentially because they get it sooner than the newspaper but it is the newspaper they look forward to the following morning to read "all" about it! But apart from the informational content (and we are now talking only of public programmes and not specialized educational broadcasts) there are many psychological and sociological satisfactions which the public derives from broadcasting as from movies. It has been found, for example, that dramas and serials provide women listeners and viewers with a source of emotional release. They give them an opportunity to "cry over the misfortune of others, or to share in their trials, to compensate them for their own troubles, or to magnify their own problems by identifying them with those of the heroes and heroines". Also, by identifying themselves with the fictional characters, they can compensate for their own inadequacies and failures. For many women such programmes are also a source of advice on meeting life's problems and on proper ways of behaviour. They are also assisted in social relationships - getting along with other people, handling husbands, rearing children, etc. They learn how to meet the threats of a hostile world or to adjust to such tragedies as a death in the family. They learn how to react when trouble comes. Some listeners and viewers consider the programmes so valuable that they sometimes refer friends seeking advice to specific programmes.

THE "WESTERN"

An example of a similar finding with regard to the popularity of the "Western" among men which has been over-simplified as mere "escape entertainment", is that the hero's single-handed ability to solve problems justly and quickly, helps to allay the frustrations that the viewer feels as an impotent individual in a complex and threatening society. It gives him a sense of security by portraying the world in which the wicked are punished and justice triumphs. Women find the Western pictures them as sharing the decisions and hardships necessary to creating a good society. This satisfies their craving for independence and in today's phraseology, perhaps for "liberation".

It is possible to question this sort of help that "escape entertainment" provides. It is tempting to say that wishful thinking and projecting blame to others are not the formulas that one should apply to solve one's problem. But obviously large numbers of people find that it helps. For the practitioner, however, there are other lessons to be learnt. If such programmes are attention-getting, he can obviously weave a message into an attractive story. Far too often the public is expected to sit through a direct talk or a straight forward presentation on topics which are supposed to help them in their day-to-day tasks; to provide them with advice on handling problems, etc. More often than not such programmes have very low "ratings" (the number of people watching or listening).

It should be possible for example, in developing countries to bring in constructive forms of advice and suggestions by weaving them into such "escape entertainment". Admittedly such programmes are more difficult to make for it takes not only professional skill but also a creative ability. Moreover, administrators who often sponsor and finance such productions in the developing countries are themselves unaware of the need for such subtle and sometimes "sub-liminal" appeals and therefore reject such productions and such producers out of hand. They look upon their audiences as the "stupid, illiterate masses" who should be told about what's good for them. They tend to forget, that in the final analysis, it is the audience which decides whether to turn that knob on the radio or television set off or on and whether they will pay their admission fee to a movie house and enter it in time to watch the "shorts" that precede it; and if they do, whether they will bring themselves to be psychologically attentive.

One researcher found that community radio sets in one of the developing countries, while being heard

were not listened to. It is this distinction that separates the good production from the bad.

MEDIA CHARACTERISTICS

At this time, it may be useful to look into the specific advantages and disadvantages that different media have within the total communication system. Obviously each of the media has certain unique qualities which it can use for its own benefit and therefore for the benefit of its audience and to society at large.

It seems only necessary to go into this question briefly, because the special characteristics of each of the media are fairly well known. However, a knowledge of the differences is useful so that practitioners in one of them could avoid the temptation of doing what another is equipped to do better.

It must be pointed out that the advantages attributed to the various media are not often supported by objective data. They represent some amount of deduction from observation and some amount of careful thinking on the part of social scientists. It can perhaps even be argued that the following statements seems so patently valid that they do not need objective demonstration.

Print

The advantages of the print media are the following:

(a) Unlike radio, television and film, which present their material at a set pace, the printed media (newspapers, magazines and books) allow the reader to set his own pace based on his abilities and interests. He can quickly scan or skip columns or pages as he pleases and therefore does not need to suffer the boredom or the bewilderment which the pace and content of other media may force upon him. Moreover, he may read at the time he chooses, stop when he wants to and resume his reading when he pleases. In short he can expose himself to the print medium whenever he is in the mood;

(b) Reading can be repeated: unlike the content of other media, printed matter is not necessarily limited to a single "showing". The reader can go back to it again and again if he wishes. Radio and television programmes, with only a few exceptions, are produced and broadcast only once. Films run for a period of days or weeks but are rarely seen twice by the same person. Therefore, theoretically at least (and often in practice) the print medium is capable of repeating the same message as it were to the same individual more than once;

(c) Treatment of a subject may be fuller: print can develop a topic to whatever degree and whatever length seems desirable. Complex discussions are therefore generally more fit for presentation in the print media;

(d) Specialized appeal is possible: despite the tendency towards mass appeal print still can cater and does cater to specialized interests. The bridge notes, crosswords, etc., are good examples in newspapers; so also are specialized books and magazines. Print does remain the medium in which minority views can most easily find voice and specialized interests can be met.

(e) Possible greater prestige: many writers have suggested that for various reasons the print media seem to have the highest prestige. One of the reasons is that print is the oldest medium and therefore has a certain tradition and prestige associated with it; also that since habitual readers get attached to specific publications, they are more likely to be influenced by "my paper".

If print does possess this prestige, then it should be able to exercise greater influence and pressure and persuade its readers. Research has not indicated any conclusive evidence to support such a view. However, it has shown that at least certain sections of the public, usually at the higher socio-economic and age and educational levels, do tend to attach more importance to what they read than what they hear or see. On the contrary a much bigger public which is less educated and lower in the socio-economic scale rates non-print media higher. This may be only because at each of these levels the exposure to a given media is higher. We do not have any definite answers yet to these complicated questions. But if print does, in fact, have a greater persuasive effect, then at least in the developing countries it seems a shame that the brunt of the persuasive task is being carried by media other than print.

BROADCASTING

(a) Television and radio have the great advantage that they can reach people who cannot be reached by print either because they cannot read or because, as in certain countries, distribution facilities are not adequate.

(b) Another advantage which has been cited is that radio and television resemble face-to-face contact and that therefore there is a greater sense of actual participation.

(c) As news distributing media they have the distinct advantage of speed.

(d) Another advantage which has been proposed is that television and radio audiences have a sense of good feeling since they know that they are all listening to the same programme at the same time, unlike newspaper readers. There is no evidence to back such a proposition but under certain conditions this can be a very real proposition and it has been shown that such a common experience does lead to greater effectiveness. We refer to the now well-known radio farm forum experiments. In such groups not only are people listening to the same voice from the same receiving set, but also take part in the discussions that follow. The

same thing may hold true in family viewing and listening.

(e) Radio and television also afford a variety of other gratifications such as counsel in daily living, self-glorification, escape from boredom, etc., which we have already alluded to in another context.

FILM

(a) Many of the characteristics of radio and television will apply to the film with some additional factors which stem from the conditions under which movies are screened. The "cinema situation", it has been suggested, changes the sense of time and space of the viewer who is more or less "in conditions similar to those for inducing hypnosis". Hence, it is contended, the cinema may be more effective than any other medium. Research has not come up with any conclusive evidence of such effectiveness.

(b) As a medium of information and knowledge, it has all the attributes of television, again with the added advantage of the bigger screen for long shots as well as close-ups.

(c) Again because of the conditions under which films are screened, they have a greater ability to give an audience a sense of identification and even of concentration.

(d) This advantage is however perhaps neutralized by the fact that the cinema viewers cannot experience the feeling of "community" and are therefore thrown almost completely on to their own private associations. Such uncritical identification with the characters on the screen results in what has been called "voluntary passivity".

(e) Films are regarded more as a medium of entertainment, but they do possess the ability to convey information on customs, habits, manners, of people beyond an audience's immediate environment. They can therefore be considerably forceful in bringing about changes in attitudes, beliefs and in behaviour.

We have seen that among the characteristics of the various media, there are some distinct differences among the media from the point of the audiences; there are also some similarities. Each medium can take advantage of its own unique characteristics and all of them can play complementary rôles. Although sometimes, in the fierce competition for advertising income and public attention, the media have tried to cross their own "natural" lines, by and large, with experience, they have learnt to make fairly good use of their own special capabilities.

As information media, for example, radio and television are primarily useful in signalizing events and making those first reports (they have killed the newspaper extra, for example) - leaving it to the newspapers to pick up the details and perhaps for the magazines to analyse in even greater detail without being rushed by the clock and by incoming news developments. Film documentaries come under the same category as magazines. They are relatively free of the pressure of time and topicality.

The serious practitioner will bring to his work a knowledge of his particular audience and of his particular medium. It is the combination of these abilities, needs and desires that provide him not only with the possibilities of effective communication but the challenges which are every professional's due.

CHAPTER V

EFFECTS (AND EFFECTIVENESS) OF MASS COMMUNICATION

The practitioner's ultimate aim, of course, is to be effective and to succeed in having some effect on his audience. Such success may sometimes be judged purely on the basis of whether an audience has been "reached", or it may be extended to include such things as "understanding" of the information; creating of a climate for discussion; the taking of a position regarding an issue; the changing of an attitude and finally, of course, the translation of all these into some action suggested by a communication or by a communicator.

The world "effect" is also used in another wider sense - as in "What is the effect on children of violence in television programmes and in the movies?" This is a much broader, almost philosophic and moral question. We shall not discuss this here at any length, only incidentally - incidental to answering the more basic questions which occur to a practitioner. Also, to give him a feel of the potential power of his medium to do good or bad.

Otherwise we shall concentrate on the conclusions of research on effectiveness and effects of communicators and their media on audiences, big and small. It is not possible to separate effectiveness from effects in any logical sense, just as it is not possible to separate audiences from channels. Most researchers have used the two words almost interchangeably. The reader, will however, be able to make his own distinction on the basis of the sequence of the influence of mass communication - i. e. from awareness to action. In other words, a message may be effective in reaching an audience, but does it have any eventual effects in bringing about change in behaviour? Hopefully the following discussion will make this clear, both from the point of view of the communicator and his medium and from the point of view of the receiver and the community of which he is part.

A DIFFICULT AREA

Of all research in mass communication the most difficult is to study its effects or its effectiveness. This is inevitably so for the very reasons mentioned earlier that man communicates within a social environment in which he is open to influences not only from within but also from without. Therefore the number of elements (or variables) which have to be taken into consideration are far too many in number and it is extremely difficult to isolate these factors. Even if one succeeds in isolating them and studying them individually, there remains the task of combining these factors and studying the effects of communication in the real or natural situation as opposed to the experimental or laboratory situation. However there are some indications, based on research, on this aspect of communication. Admittedly we know more about what mass communication cannot do rather than what it can!

Some of the broad generalizations which have been made are unfortunately the kind that only researchers have any patience to read. An example is: that under some conditions mass communication affects a few people a great deal and a few people very little and under other conditions it affects a large number of people a great deal and a large number of people very little and that under almost any condition mass communication affects every one at least a little. While it is true that such a statement does not tell us much, it is still nevertheless worth noting, merely because a lot of us continue to believe that mass communication is extremely powerful under any condition. Even if a practitioner were to at least stop and think about possible conditions in his own environment at a given time and place, he would certainly be able to do a better job if he wants to be effective.

INTERNAL CONFLICT

One of the most interesting findings of research in so far as effectiveness is concerned is that most people expose themselves to information which agrees with their own existing point of view and that this is because most people do not want to place

themselves voluntarily in a situation of conflict. In other words, the average person feels most comfortable when his own views are reinforced by information to which he exposes himself. This recently developed "theory of cognitive dissonance" has become an important contribution to the understanding of audience behaviours and of mass communication effectiveness.

If most people behave this way, then obviously most of the content of the mass media should be incapable of changing attitudes or opinions. This is too simple a conclusion. All mass communication is not totally ineffective. For, it has also been shown that often information to which one is exposed "accidentally" as it were is remembered and sometimes acted upon. This concept which is worth noting is called the "sleeper effect". Essentially what this means is that a person usually will believe information which he gets from a source in which he has faith. The same person will disregard information (even the same information) which he receives from a source in which he has less faith or no faith. But it often happens that a person who is exposed to information from a source of less credibility (to him), forgets, after a period of time, the source but retains the information. At that time he would tend to believe that information - the same information which he had discredited when he was conscious of the source.

What does all this mean to the practitioner and the administrator? Partly it means that the researcher has few exact guidelines to provide at this time. But partly it also means that the practitioner should not be complacent about his effectiveness. He has to "try harder". In his choice of quoting sources, in his choice of the kind of appeal (strong and weak) he makes in his presentation, in his decision on the frequency at which he might repeat his messages and in his order of presentation of pro and con arrangements in a complicated social issue, there are guidelines which research has provided. We shall discuss these later in this section.

Suffice to say here that there are indications of mass communication effectiveness - but there are no indications of its infallibility. The serious practitioner must know both sides of the picture before he can make himself and his medium effective.

PUBLIC DEBATE

It is only lately, especially after the advent of television that serious public debate has taken place on the possible effects of the media. Most of this debate has centred around television and to some extent movies. This is obviously because the public is particularly concerned about the increase in crime and violence, about immorality and about escapism. Another area of intense criticism of the "normal" fare of the media is its effects on children. At the same time, the media have also come in for some praise for their ability to expand educational experience out of school and educational achievement within the schools.

Such public debate, most of it based on intuition, hearsay and emotion, has been conducted at a very low level. But it has succeeded in provoking not only the mass media (especially television) to look at themselves, but also led to high-level committees and research groups being set up to look into this whole question systematically and examine the evidence carefully. Unfortunately, however, no conclusive evidence is as yet available. But because of the emotions involved, whatever little evidence is available, pro or con, is now being used by the interested parties in the debate and the fragments of evidence have become the "arms" in the fight - proving once again the existence of "selective exposure" and "selective perception"!

This inability on the part of research to provide definitive answers has perhaps caused a diminution in the status of the social scientists. This is because he has admitted honestly that with the tools now at his command he is not in a position to give definitive answers to all the questions which are being asked. In fact, in some ways he may have even added to the confusion by admitting that perhaps each of the parties to the debate may have something in what they say. In an emotional situation this is all that is necessary for the media people and their supporters on the one side and for media critics and their supporters on the other side. As Klapper wrote, "It is surely no wonder that a bewildered public should regard with cynicism a research tradition which supplies, instead of definitive answers, a plethora of relevant, but inconclusive and at times seemingly contradictory findings".

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Apart from the fact that in the whole area of mass communication research the effects are hardest to study, there is also the researchers' natural tendency to be cautious in making any pronouncements. Therefore no exact cause and effect relationships between the media and their audiences have been even suggested. Whatever general statements have been made talk about the long-term effects of mass communication. In so far as short-term effects are concerned the statements have been very guarded - understandably.

Research is now agreed upon one thing: that in the long-term mass media do have effects, even if these cannot always be measured in the short term. During a political campaign, for example, the media have little or no effect on voting decisions (in the short term) but over a longer period of time the media do succeed in bringing political personalities, issues and problems to public attention and therefore provoke public discussion effectively

enough for the political process to have immeasurable impact. It is in the early stages of the political process leading to election campaigns that images are built and discussions take place resulting in decision-making. It is only a small minority that is willing to change its decisions (whether to vote and whom to vote for) in the last few weeks of a campaign.

We have already noted that people generally expose themselves to messages which reinforce (or agree with) their own prior attitudes and that these prior attitudes are governed by several social psychological factors which play such an important rôle in human behaviour including human communication behaviour. These factors are: the individual's own predispositions; his group membership and that group's values and beliefs; the nature of the inter-personal networks of communications of which he is part and the opinions of his own influentials. We have also seen that the media work alongside all these factors and that they work through some of them.

SOME GENERALIZATIONS

Let us now look at some of the broad generalizations which have come out of research on the effects of mass communication. Most of these, it must be remembered have come from short-term studies because of the difficulty of conducting long-term studies.

Mass communication ordinarily does not provide the single and direct cause of audience effects but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences (we have already summed up these factors).

Mass communication, therefore, usually becomes a contributory agent but not the sole cause, in a process of reinforcing the existing conditions. This is true in all areas of human behaviour, political or social or cultural.

When mass communication does function as an agent of change one of two conditions is likely to exist: (a) the mediating factor will be found to be inoperative and the effect of the media will then be direct: or (b) the mediating factors, which normally favour reinforcement will be found to be themselves impelling towards change.

The influence of mass communication, either as a contributory agent or as an agent of direct effect, is affected by various aspects of the media themselves or of the communication situation. These include such things as the manner of presentation of issues, of the source of the communication, the medium, the existing climate of public opinion, etc.

All these may sound terribly confusing to the practitioner of mass communication. Perhaps we can clarify some of them by being more specific.

MOUNTING A CAMPAIGN

We can perhaps start at the beginning. Let us say that an administrator of a mass communication campaign would like to convince farmers of the efficacy of a new type of fertilizer and his task is to induce the farmers to use such a fertilizer. This means that he is attempting to show them and to convince them that the practices that he is suggesting are better than the traditional methods; that if more farmers change their methods they would produce more rice or wheat or whatever and that this would mean not only that the farmer would benefit by having a higher income but also that the larger community of which he is a member would benefit.

There are several questions which must occur to him in the process of mounting such a campaign. If he is a typical administrator he will go about his task perhaps somewhat as follows: he will probably be asked to attend a couple of meetings with officials of the Ministry of Agriculture who will inform him of the need for a communication campaign to "sell" the new fertilizer and give him a few facts and figures about the experiments done on it. From then on he is more or less on his own.

The administrator knows that there are some agricultural workers in the rural areas, he presumes that they have access to the farmers and that therefore they can be used as the oral channels of communication and that they would perhaps also be able to "demonstrate" the use of the new fertilizer. In his own ministry, the Ministry of Information, he knows that he can arrange for the printing of brochures and posters, perhaps the making of film slides and picture charts and that he can arrange for films to be made on the advantages of the new fertilizer. He can also arrange for broadcasting radio and television programmes periodically. He then looks to the newspapers and allocates some money to buy space in them for advertisements. He will also arrange for handouts and photographs and he may also meet some of the editors and publishers to gain their co-operation. This is the situation as it generally exists in the developing countries.

What the administrator has set out to do is not only typical but generally speaking correct. If campaigns have failed it is not because of the lack of a good general approach. It is usually in the detail. And it is generally in the detail that a campaign is either slow in picking up or does not pick up at all.

ADMINISTRATOR'S QUESTIONS

Now let us look at what we mean by detail. In this discussion the media practitioner will be able to see that most of the points discussed will also refer to him and his own tasks. After all no communication campaign can succeed without the active

participation of the practitioner. The questions that will naturally occur to the administrator are:

1. What are the media at my disposal? We have already indicated what these might be, although there may be others such as the traditional media (song and drama units, puppet shows, etc.).

2. Which of these media should I use? The answer to this is that he should use whatever media he thinks reach the audience that he is particularly interested in - that is the farmers.

3. What do I know about the farmers' media habits? Obviously unless he knows what the farmers listen to or read or view he cannot correctly place his messages about the new fertilizer in proper proportions in the media. If the farmers are largely illiterate the newspapers will certainly rate low (except for some of the élite farmers); the brochures will contain more pictorial matter rather than long, written explanations and the same goes for posters. If the farmers have radios he will certainly rely heavily on that medium and so on.

4. In what proportions do I allocate my resources? Based on his knowledge of the audience's media habits he will make decisions on his use of the various media and calculate the expenditure involved. A great deal will also depend on the human and material resources he has at his command. For example there is no point in printing a whole lot of brochures unless he has people who can not only distribute them but also explain the content of these brochures to the farmers.

5. What kind of content will I put in the media? This will depend on his knowledge of the relative merits of the media in reaching the audience that he wishes to reach; their level of understanding, their prior attitudes, etc. The level of presentation will also depend on such knowledge. He must also have a fairly good idea of the segments within his audience - some may be highly educated and some may not be educated at all. Obviously he cannot use the same content for his entire audience. If he does so he will end up by either insulting the intelligence of some of them or by failing to communicate at all with perhaps the majority.

6. How can I make sure that I am putting in the right content at the right level for the various segments of my audience? He can only make himself sure about this by "pre-testing" the various messages among representative samples of the audiences. In other words, before he prints a hundred thousand posters he will test his prototypes among a few groups of the kind of audiences he wishes to reach with that poster and study the results of such a pre-test to find out if they understand what it says and how they perceive the message that it wants to convey. If the results are not encouraging he will get the poster redesigned on the basis of the reactions of his sample audiences.

7. Once the campaign is under way how do I know whether it is going along the lines that I want it to? This he can find out only through periodic reports from the field by trained observers whose reports must provide the administrator with the feedback that he needs. On the basis of that feedback he can change the strategy of communication if and when it seems necessary. Without such feedback he has no assurance that all of his efforts at preparing the campaign are, in fact, paying off.

8. How long do I continue to run the campaign? This will depend on his resources and the needs of the country as well as the effectiveness of the campaign. But it must be kept in mind that however successful a campaign, a continuing effort (even on a reduced scale) is essential to keep the message alive, not only among the present farming community but those younger farmers who will be joining such a community in the future.

THE PRACTITIONER'S ROLE

These questions are by no means complete, but they are typical of the kind of questions which must occur to a communication administrator. In slightly different form they will also occur to the communication practitioner. Let us try and list them as they might occur to the practitioner in a single medium. Let us take the head of a broadcasting station in the same kind of a structure or communication system within which the administrator of the type we have discussed operates.

This broadcasting station would then be one which is part of a governmental network and which receives its policy directives from the Ministry of Information. Without going into the administrative problems in any detail, let us confine ourselves to the professional aspects, but keeping in mind that the professional in such a situation operates with all the advantages and disadvantages that an administrative structure offers. Let us also assume that the director of the broadcasting station has come from professional ranks and therefore asks himself some professional questions as the following:

1. How do I go about translating these directives from the Ministry of Information into action? He will get as much information as possible on not only the material resources made available by the administrator for his particular unit but also the subject matter. He will probably discuss these with a few producers and other production staff. He will decide on the length and the number of programmes he can produce. He will make a tentative list of the subjects to be covered and he may also allocate responsibilities among his production staff. The production staff in turn will then look for researchers, script writers, actors, announcers, commentators, etc. The ideal of course, would be if all these professionals including especially the interviewers were to prepare themselves fully by reading up something on farming and fertilizers, old and new.

2. What do I know about the farmers' radio listening habits? In the case of the practitioner

he needs this information in greater detail. For example at what time is the farmer usually free and at different times in the farming cycle? What type of farmers are there in his own region, breaking up by age, educational level, perhaps religion, caste, etc? If such information is not readily available, this will first have to be gathered. If there is a dialect or dialects in use in the region, can the practitioner obtain people who can use the dialect in the programmes? He would also like to know how many radio sets there are in the area and are they mostly community radio sets or privately owned or both.

3. In what proportions do I divide my programmes? The station director, on the basis of suggestions and advice will have to make decisions now on the various types of programmes that he can produce: the drama, the interview, the straight talk, technical presentations on the characteristics of the fertilizer itself, general documentaries on the use of the fertilizer in other parts of the world, etc.

4. How can I make sure that I am putting in the right content at the right level for the various segments of my listeners? Pre-testing is again the answer and if for some reasons he cannot do so, an immediate post-testing is essential so that the director of programmes can at least prevent repetitions of the same errors.

5. Once my campaign is under way how do I know whether it is going along the lines that I want it to? In the case of the practitioner it is perhaps easier to arrange for such information because he is closer to the scene and can get his own staff to feed back information to him. His staff should be able to make a fairly systematic analysis of audience reactions to the various types of programmes presented. If the drama seems to be more effective than the interview or the straight talk, the director would like to know this and change his strategy. If the language used in the programmes seems to be unintelligible, or the wrong dialect, he should be able to get new script writers or train the old. In addition, the practitioner has the responsibility to feed this information back to the administrator at the top and tell him why he is making some changes.

6. How long do I continue to run the campaign? Usually in the case of the director of a broadcasting station this decision is perhaps already made for him. However that decision will depend on his own assessment as it is fed back to the decision-making administrator who would like to continue the campaign if the station director can convince him of the efficacy of the campaign as conducted through the radio and of the need for its continuation.

7. What can I do to make the campaign even more effective? The answer to this question must come from the field. If his staff working in the field have been making some suggestions in their periodic reports these suggestions themselves can act as a basis for experimentation. Such experiments can be tested in their turn and experience becomes cumulative. The Radio Farm Forum, for example, came out of such experience - that since farmers discussed the content of a programme after listening to it, why not informally organize the farmers into a discussion group? It has been shown that such personal participation in a discussion leads to better understanding of the content and consequently a greater retention of the content. Organizing such a group means that there has to be a leader and the leader obviously has to be an informed person himself even if he acted more as a moderator rather than a leader. In fact if he is trained to give the impression that any suggestions for action come from the group itself there is more likelihood of such decisions being translated into action.

It is perhaps unnecessary to go into any other media. The newspaper man, the film maker, etc., will no doubt also act on the basis of the same or similar questions, each one has his own potential audience and each has the particular characteristics of his own medium to deal with. We have already discussed some of those characteristics in an earlier section.

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS

But in the context of persuasive communication when we are trying to influence an audience, what conditions need to be met? It may be useful to list these briefly, although they are all, by implication, present in our earlier discussion.

1. The audience must, somehow, be exposed to the communication.

2. All or most of the audience must interpret or perceive correctly what attitude or action the communicator is asking of them and why.

3. The audience must remember or retain the gist of the message that the communicator is trying to get across, for immediate action is not always possible.

4. Members of the audience must decide whether or not they will be influenced by the communication. Some of them may try out a new practice before finally adopting it.

Obviously it is impossible for a communicator to ensure that each and every member of his audience will indeed take the action that he is recommending. But as a professional communicator it must be possible for him to make sure of the first three conditions. The ability of a practitioner is tested by the way he goes about his tasks and what results he is able to achieve. The more systematically he approaches his tasks and the more willing he is not only to allow for feedback but also to arrange for true feedback, the more effective he can be. It is here that researchers (or evaluators) can help him. They cannot teach him his profession and they cannot, in most cases, tell him what techniques to use in so far as his craft is concerned,

but they can analyse those techniques and feed him information on whether his techniques are working or not - if he is willing to listen.

TECHNIQUES

Let us look at a few examples of those techniques:

1. One of the classic studies in the field of communication research went into the question of the effect of emotional appeals. Intuitively a communicator tends to feel that the more intense his appeal the greater its possible effect. However, an experiment conducted with groups of students who were exposed to three versions of a 15-minute talk on dental hygiene showed that although each version contained the same general information and made similar recommendations, they had different effects. The "strong" appeal emphasized the pain caused by tooth decay and was illustrated with slides showing diseased gums; in the "moderate" appeal the threats appeared less often and in a milder form; in the "minimal" fear-appeal version the more severe threats were replaced by fairly neutral information. The main results of the experiment indicated that the minimal fear-appeal was more effective, followed by the moderate appeal. The strong appeal brought about the least amount of change in the hygienic behaviour of the audience. The researcher's own conclusion was that "when fear is strongly aroused but not adequately relieved by the reassurances contained in a persuasive communication, the audience will become motivated to ignore or to minimize the importance of the threat".

The lesson for the practitioner may be that no message should promise or threaten more than what is reasonable and that the audience has its own defensive mechanisms. In fact the possibilities of "counter-propaganda" increase when such unrealistic promises are made or when highly emotional fears are aroused.

A good example of such counter-propaganda (which then becomes more difficult for communicators to neutralize) is the experience of an "oversell" on the part of some family planning communicators in a developing country. The IUD was "sold" as being painless, safe and reversible. Three categorical promises. When it turned out that it was not painless in many instances, its other advantages of safety and reversibility were all but forgotten. A less categorical claim may have been better, for it must be remembered that in the complicated communication channels in society one dissatisfied person who feels that she has been "taken in" can cause a surprising amount of damage and once such damage has been caused it is extremely difficult for communication to undo it. It is far easier (even if slower) to think of possible repercussions and counter arguments and to plan a message accordingly.

2. An example may clarify this. A study was done to find out whether in making out a case for a recommended change in attitude or behaviour, it is better to present only one side of an argument or both sides. It was shown that in the case of those who are initially opposed to the communicator's position, it is better to present both sides of an argument but that in the case of a person who is initially in favour of the communicator's position, a one-sided argument can be effective. The implications can be seen clearly in the case of the family planning example which we discussed in the previous paragraph.

Some knowledge of the initial attitudes of the audience will help the communicator greatly in planning his message. It would also help to know the audience's general educational background for it was found that with the better educated group the two-sided presentation is generally more effective regardless of initial attitude, whereas in the case of the less educated it was the other way round.

3. In addition to the presentation of arguments there is also the problem of the sequence in which these arguments may be presented. In other words, does the argument presented first have a better chance of influencing people than that presented second? The limited research done indicates that the first presentation changes opinion more than the second presentation changes them back. For the communication practitioner, it seems the best thing to do would be to see the first presentation is as clear, honest and compelling as possible so that the possibility of counter propaganda is minimized.

DETERMINANTS OF EFFECT

The preceding discussion has been concerned primarily with the overall effectiveness of the various mass media. We shall now try and look at some particular aspects so as to get an idea of some of the determinants of effect. Such determinants obviously are: the communicator, the communication, the medium and the audience. We have discussed some of their characteristics earlier. It may, however, be helpful to look at them again briefly from the point of view of effectiveness.

THE COMMUNICATOR

What is said, however compelling and convincing, is generally not sufficient. Who says it is almost just as important and occasionally even more important. A number of studies which have gone into this question show that the difference made by the credibility of the source to identical messages is quite sizeable in its immediate effect. Credibility, of course, depends on the perception of the reader or listener. For example, if a reader is more favourably inclined towards a given magazine than a given newspaper, even if the same message is carried by both, the effect of that magazine saying

so will be greater on him than of the newspaper. The same thing goes for speakers, commentators, editorials, etc.

The audience need not always have direct knowledge or association with the source. If a writer, for example, is identified as a specialist in economics, what he may have to say on devaluation will be more effective than if the same discussion is led by a person who is not so identified. It would seem worthwhile for a practitioner or an administrator to try to use the name of a trustworthy source (and the sources may vary from community to community) in all forms of persuasive communication. The source need not always be a big name; a successful user of a contraceptive device, for example, may be considered as a trustworthy source by an audience of women for whom it is easy to identify with such a source. Needless to say, such "trustworthy" sources can be found in every field of human behaviour.

THE COMMUNICATION

In so far as the communication itself is concerned, the effects of the mass media are influenced both by the character and the content of the message. Research has been done on the types of appeals employed and arrangement of the elements of an argument. We have discussed these earlier in this section.

A few interesting studies have also been done to find out if "emotional" appeals would be more effective than "rational" appeals. In these studies where a difference showed up, it was clear that the emotional appeal was more effective - but the researchers have warned that there are individual differences among audiences based on such factors as age, education, etc.

THE MEDIUM

Although there are a considerable number of studies which have compared one medium with another in terms of achieving some desired effects, few definitive conclusions have emerged owing to problems connected with this kind of research in the natural situation.

The most outstanding finding, which in fact has little to do with relative effectiveness of the media, is that oral presentation of material is more effective than any media presentation! However, some guarded generalizations are possible for the media themselves.

One is that the learning effectiveness of different channels and combination of channels seems to depend more on how the channels are used and by whom than on the channels themselves. This is directly related to the selective attention concept which we have discussed. Therefore, some knowledge of the media habits of the audience is necessary before an administrator can decide which media or combination of media he is going to utilize in a campaign. Of course, he can use all of them or most of them. But research also warns, as we have seen, that multiple channels may sometime divide attention to a point where optimal learning is not possible through any one channel. This is particularly so in the audio-visual media, of course. The use of badly chosen pictorial illustrations in television, for example, may distract from the learning process which is already taking place through the audio channel.

Films and television have been generally found to be more effective in learning, than other media. But more of such research has been done on learning than on persuasion and especially among school children. We have left the educational aspects of the mass media (especially in-school) mostly out of our discussion since it is a highly specialized field and has its own special characteristics and problems.

MEDIA DIFFERENCES

We have already indicated that research on the relative effectiveness of the media has not provided enough grounds for generalizations and we have said that one of the reasons for this is the exposure of the audience to the various media. It may be worthwhile discussing in what respects the media differ in this regard - i.e. the kind of audience they attract and the degree to which they hold the attention of the audience. Any effects that communication may have are obviously bound to these factors.

For a medium to be effective, it must obviously fulfil some conditions:

(a) it must be easily available;

(b) it should stand out from the rest of its background;

(c) it must satisfy the needs of the person whose own previous experience leads him to a certain medium and not to another;

(d) that person should find it useful and fit the kind of information that he is seeking.

Education and social status have considerable influence on the media selection of people. It has been found, for example, that the higher the education, the greater the preference for the print media and for informational and news content over the other media.

THE AUDIENCE

In our earlier discussion we had already indicated the importance of audience characteristics with reference to the communicator, the communication and to the media. Research on effects has added our knowledge of audiences in a specific sense. However, much of this research has been concer

with individuals and with small groups. To the average practitioner and administrator, this may not seem to be of much practical use, because they are interested in bigger groups and in larger numbers. But a general idea of how personality factors may affect communication can help when a communicator already has some basic knowledge of the value systems of the beliefs and of the cultural milieu in which his audience lives.

One of the biggest problems that the communicator faces in any attempts to produce changes in significant sections of the audience is the fact that often although an audience may expose itself to a message, no real change occurs. The communication brings about awareness but no action. Then, of course, there are sections among a potential audience which do not even expose themselves to the message.

MOTIVATION

The communicator's main interest is to have some knowledge of the variations in the extent to which individuals who are exposed to a given communication are likely to be influenced by it. There are two general factors which may explain such variation. One is intellectual ability and the other is motivation. These determine whether an individual pays attention to the communication, whether he absorbs and understands the content and finally whether he accepts the message contained in the communication and is willing to act upon it.

Researchers agree that there is a positive correlation between intellectual ability and the degree to which an individual is able to acquire the knowledge flowing from communication. This means that the higher one's intellectual ability the greater the amount of content he takes in. However, most research in this area so far has concerned itself with information on public affairs, politics, etc. There is less research on occupational content such as about farming or, in the case of women (especially in the developing countries) about hygiene, sanitation, child rearing, etc. One study showed that there are sex differences. "How the individual relates the news about government to the male or female social rôle has bearing on the amount of learning of factual information". One can assume perhaps that this is also true in the case of non-governmental information.

Differences in motivation also play an important rôle in determining how much is learnt from communication. In other words the higher the interest of a person in a given topic the greater he will learn from communication on that topic. But motivation factors also have a tendency to work in different ways, depending upon one's own prior attitudes towards the subject. If one is interested in a given subject but has a strong preconception about it and has already taken a strong position for or against that subject, while his learning may increase, no attitudinal change may take place.

One classic study in the literature showed that the prejudiced individuals (in this case, prejudice against negroes) protected themselves by reading into the message content which was in fact not there. In one instance, an open penknife, which was in the hand of a white man was conveniently "transferred" to that of his black neighbour when respondents were asked to describe what they had seen in a cartoon showed to them for a few seconds.

We can therefore see that apart from learning the content of communication there is a problem of the acceptance of what the message implies. While learning may be related positively to intellectual ability, acceptance may in fact be negative. Some have suggested that this is indeed as it should be; the less intelligent are more susceptible to persuasive communication than the more intelligent.

But in so far as direct evidence of mass communication changing attitudes and behaviour is concerned, there is not a great deal. We have already indicated how research has shown that in the process through which mass communication travels, changes in attitude and behaviour are closely related to psychological and sociological factors among the audience. But it has conclusively shown that mass communication cannot only effectively bring new information and issues to the attention of the public, but that when properly directed and evaluated at every stage, it can also effectively work through inter-personal channels in bringing about attitudinal and behavioural changes.

Mass communication's biggest asset in this regard is the capacity it has to take information and knowledge to large numbers of people and expose them to new subjects, to new ideas and to new issues. We have also referred to the influentials and the opinion leaders and their rôle in the communication process. How and when mass communication can "use" such people depends on the knowledge that the practitioner and the administrator have of their particular community and to what extent the practitioner and administrator are themselves motivated to make use of their professional ability to bring about the desired effects in an orderly way.

THE MEDIA

We can perhaps summarize our discussion on effectiveness of mass communication by taking another look at the media. Granted that research on effectiveness is difficult, what are some of the broad generalizations which can safely be made - about all the media?

1. The media have the power to focus attention on issues, on events and on personalities and thus to direct a great deal of the discussion within society. All the media have this power.
2. The media have the power to confer status,

both on the communicator and on the personalities the communicator brings up for attention. In other words, the media have made famous (or notorious) not only politicians or actors and actresses but also newspapermen, commentators of the broadcast media, film producers, etc.

3. Face-to-face persuasion is more effective than persuasion through the audio-visual media and this is in turn more effective than persuasion through the print media. However, it must be borne in mind that some topics can be presented better by some media than others. The relative persuasive power of the different media is therefore likely to vary from subject to subject. For example, the chemical differences between two fertilizers can perhaps be better explained orally or through the print media while the techniques of their actual use may be more effectively presented visually.

4. A combination of media communication and face-to-face communication is likely to be more effective than either alone. A good example is the proven effectiveness of the radio farm forums in which a rural programme presented by radio is immediately followed by a discussion by the organized listening group. Similarly it has been found that a combination of educational television programme and classroom teaching is more effective than either alone.

All these generalizations must necessarily be viewed against the fact that at any given time, under any given condition, there will be differences within audiences. Obviously, therefore, the effectiveness of the medium would depend on the characteristics of the audience. Similarly the effectiveness will also depend on the content and on presentation. Whatever generalizations have been made can only be based on the old precept of "other things being equal".

There is an old example of the lack of effectiveness of a programme on chicken farming on a radio farm forum group which turned out to be composed almost entirely of vegeterians! The content was not "relevant". Surely similar examples can be found in all the media. Unless the content falls within the experiences and interests (and understanding ability) of an audience however powerful a medium, the message would be ineffective.

Another factor to be taken into account is that audiences themselves differ in so far as their approach to the various media is concerned. In other words for certain kinds of audiences certain media can be more effective than others.

The print media, in a given culture, for example, may be more effective in reaching the higher socio-economic and educational levels than radio or television. Similarly, radio may be more effective in reaching the rural audiences of the developing countries, for obvious reasons, than the print media or television. Basic data on media use, therefore, becomes indispensable to the administrator of a mass communication campaign. There are many examples of wasted human and material resources in the developing countries stemming from the administrator's metropolitan orientation unquestioningly guiding his decisions of media use in non-metropolitan areas.

Let us take a brief second look at specific media from the point of view of effectiveness:

Print media

Research on newspapers has indicated that there seems to be very little effect, positive or negative, arising out of the support of a majority of newspapers to a given candidate or party during a political campaign, on the success or failure of that candidate or party at the polls. However, it must be noted that this is a study of the short-term effects and refers to election issues over which the public have probably already made up their minds.

In other areas of human behaviour, especially those which call for change in attitudes over a longer period of time, the print media have a greater impact, especially in bringing up for discussion and thought, issues, people, places, events, etc. We have noted the considerable advantages that this print media have over other media for this kind of serious and prolonged exposure on the part of the audience.

Film

From the point of view of effects, film has been studied more extensively than newspapers. This is partly because it is easier to reach the audience which normally is physically present together and in a public place unlike the audiences for other media which are scattered over a wide area. But with film too only short-term measurements have been made because of the difficulties of long-term evaluation. Most films are concerned purely with entertainment. Here we are concerned only with research done on those films whose main purpose is to instruct, to provide knowledge, to change opinions and beliefs. In the short-term, it has been shown that the film is reasonably effective in conveying information, but not as effective in changing behaviour, although the effects are not negligible.

Researchers have also pointed out that messages stated in a generalized form are not likely to be understood and accepted by any significant portion of an audience and that messages which are not explicitly stated are likely to be entirely lost upon the less intelligent members of the audience. In other words, if one is dealing with some complex material, an explicit presentation of the conclusions of the communicator must be made. This is more effective, especially in the case of the less educated.

Radio

The major operator of radio has been the government, not only in the developing countries but also in some of the industrially advanced countries. Some studies done on radio programmes directed at farmers have shown that as a medium concerned with changes in farming practices, radio ranked above brochures, posters, exhibits, etc. But there have also been studies which have not provided such happy results.

The study of the effects of radio listening on the use of other media (studied before the spread of television) provides considerable evidence that radio listening does not necessarily affect newspaper reading or exposure to books and magazines. In fact it may be complementary; the stimulation for reading newspapers and magazines may come from listening to programmes over the radio. People who "accidentally" listen to a radio discussion of political issues, for example, may be led to read political news in newspapers and magazines. Those who are not exposed to one generally are not exposed to the other. A study done in a rural community of a developing country showed that of the six people who regularly listened to the community radio set, five were also regular newspaper readers.

Television

The development of television has been extremely rapid and dramatic in large parts of the world. The effectiveness of this medium has been studied extensively and much of it has concerned itself with the instructional use of it. It has been shown that it can be extremely effective for this purpose not only in the case of children but also of adults (literacy, for example). However, it has been stressed by researchers that television cannot replace the traditional classroom teacher. The teacher continues to be necessary not only to allow for discussion of the content of a programme, but also for purely psychological reasons, and also because students can get the necessary personal attention which they need.

An incidental effect of television has been the extent to which it has changed the pattern of life of the typical family, especially its leisure time activities. However, it has not radically changed a family's exposure to newspapers or magazines.

The incidental or unexpected and unintentioned effects of mass communication are many. We will only look at a few.

Unanticipated effects

We have already indicated that there are some long-term effects which may not show up in the short-term and vice versa. We have touched briefly upon what is referred to as the "sleeper effect" which has to do with the credibility of the source and the content of the message as related to the audience's tendency to forget the source that remembered the content.

Another kind of effect which researchers have discovered has been called "unanticipated consequences" (or unintended effects). For example, the purpose of a film or a radio programme may be defined as pure entertainment by the communicator, but have very positive effects on an audience. We have seen, for example, where a light drama may be "used" by women audiences to learn how to deal with household problems and how the practitioner may use such "entertainment-type" presentations for intentional persuasion. In advertising parlance this may be referred to as the "soft sell".

Examples of unintended effects will no doubt occur to the practitioner from his own experience - not necessarily professional, but social. The whole area of "cross-cultural communication" is replete with them, especially in the field of international communication. Mass communication has unintendedly changed the life patterns of whole populations, whether it is in the mode of dress or the tastes in music and in soft drinks or in the length of a boy's hair. The leadership in many countries, especially the traditional, developing countries, are showing increasing concern about this "phenomenon" on the eve of the advent of satellite communication in many of them.

The individual socially responsible practitioner may feel helpless in this larger global context, but it is a subject he should be concerned about - as a professional and as a citizen.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapters we have attempted to discuss the whole field of mass communication, however briefly, to try and obtain a picture of it as it looks today from the present knowledge of the field. We have deliberately confined our discussions to some of the broad generalizations which have stood the test of time (relatively speaking) and the continuing efforts of researches to question them and test contradictory hypotheses. We have not attempted to confuse the issues by presenting conflicting views or the results of on-going research. While this has advantages for the newcomer to the study of mass communication and especially to the practitioner and administrator who have to act and take decisions now rather than wait for research to come up with definitive principles, it also has certain disadvantages.

We have indicated that some of these generalizations, as they stand today, may still be somewhat speculative. Therefore communication strategies based on such relatively incomplete evidence may not always work. But we know that the complicated nature of the process of communication makes such complete assurance practically impossible. However, we have maintained that any action based upon some evidence is better than pure intuition alone. We have given examples of such profitable action. We have also indicated that an experienced practitioner of mass communication instinctively has a certain understanding of what may be effective and what may not be, but that there is need and scope for a fuller understanding and therefore of greater effectiveness for both of which some exposure to the conclusions of research and of systematic study are essential.

We have accepted Thomas Carroll's maxim that the greatest problem of communication is the illusion that it has been achieved and said that our concern for purposes of this discussion is that communication researchers have been less than effective in reaching the communication practitioners and that communication practitioners have not been as effective as they can be in communicating with their audiences in large parts of the world where such effectiveness is vital for the social, economic, cultural and political development of societies and for bringing about greatly needed social change and modernization. Consequently we have made the assumption that if the practice of mass communication is based on research on mass communication the chances of more effective communication can be increased. We have therefore also assumed that if today practice does not seem to be based on research as systematically as it could be this is because the opportunities for practitioners and potential practitioners to be exposed to research findings is badly limited. We have stressed the need for a dialogue between the two; we have stressed the fact that the relationship between the practitioner and the administrator on the one hand and the researcher on the other must be one of mutual trust and mutual appreciation.

We have talked a little bit about the historical development of mass communication and indicated that in some ways it is an offshoot of the traditional field of journalism, but that there are some significant differences between journalism and mass communication. In doing so we have also drawn a distinction between mass communication and interpersonal communication, while recognizing the very close interrelationship between the two. The process of mass communication cannot be separated from the process of inter-personal communication. But our concern has been mainly with mass communication and therefore has leaned more heavily in that direction in so far as the present problems of communication with mass audiences are concerned. We have accepted the claim that communication (the combination of mass communication and inter-personal communication) is the fundamental social process. Now let us briefly recapitulate what we have said in our discussion of the communication process, of the communicator, of the media of mass communication and their audiences, the effectiveness and the effects of mass communication, and finally of research itself.

THE PROCESS

Communication, which was originally perceived as a one way process and as "something someone does to someone else", is now recognized as an act of sharing in which the communicator and his audience are both active partners. While a communicator may be trying to reach a given audience, that audience is itself attempting to reach given communicators and these may not always be the same. The process therefore becomes complicated and unless a sameness can be achieved no effective communication can take place.

In the case of mass communication, a machine is introduced which enables the communicator not only to duplicate his messages but also to send them over long distances and thus cover wide audiences. By doing so the practitioner of mass communication is making his own task of communicating far more difficult than when he, as a person, talks to another. In the inter-personal situation he can get immediate feedback and tell fairly well whether his message is getting across or not. But in the mass communication situation he gets no such feedback except much later, if at all. He is also dealing with a heterogeneous audience composed of people of various socio-economic and educational and age levels whose needs and aspirations and whose levels of understanding are very different. In such a situation the communicator can only hope that his message or messages will be communicated and disseminated in such a way that they will have the desired effect on reasonably large segments of the audience or audiences.

For a clear understanding of mass communica- it is important to remember that while communication may do something to people, unless people do something with that communication the relationship between communicator and people is not complete. Unfortunately most of the time, therefore, communication or the messages of the communicator are merely dissipating themselves. A person's exposure to mass communication may be just a habit, or a ritual, as in the case of the newspaper at the breakfast table. Unless the reader wants to absorb the persuasion of an editor or a commentator or is willing to be entertained by the human interest stories or cartoons in the newspaper no communication can take place. Different messages have different purposes (our concern have been mainly with the purposive and persuasive forms). The purpose of the communicator must meet the needs of the receiver. Only then can the objective of communication be achieved.

From the communicator's point of view the objective of a communication may be to inform, to teach, to entertain or to persuade. From the receiver's point of view the corresponding needs would be to understand, to learn, to enjoy and to decide. For a communicator, therefore, it is important to have a fairly good idea of the needs of his audience. It is also important that he understands the communicator (that is himself) and his medium.

THE COMMUNICATOR

Because of the nature of mass communication, the communicator is a professional working for and within an organization which itself is a social institution. Therefore as a member of an organization and as a member of society, he is susceptible to influences and forces beyond his control. As a member of a professional group his own psychological, sociological and creative needs have to be satisfied. The conflicts which arise in such satisfaction, often make him less of a free agent than he would prefer to be. In so far as he is constrained to work as a member of an organization, certain bureaucratic and other organizational factors also come into play. His awareness of these limitations and his abilities to feel secure within those limitations and to the extent to which he is himself capable of overriding those limitations have a bearing on the style and manner of his work. In addition he also has to achieve a working relationship with members of the society outside of his own profession with whom he is in contact in his own work. His perception of them and his attitude towards them together with their perception and attitude towards him play a significant rôle in the communication process.

THE MEDIUM

The practitioner of mass communication has another big handicap (in addition to himself and his "obstinate audience"): his medium. There is no "perfect" medium. Each medium has its own advantages and disadvantages and in the vast market of mass communication they are all competing in their own imperfect way to be able to reach the largest number or the most highly influential of the people whom they wish to sell their product to or convince of the rightness of their argument. An understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of his own medium can stand the practitioner in good stead; together with knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the other media. In addition to the competitive aspects of the media, there are many complementary aspects which also should be appreciated. The older media (such as newspapers) have in some ways already experienced the advantages of having the newer media (such as television and movies) and within the newer media themselves, the initial fears of going out of business (for example films, by the advent of television) have been disproved and in some cases actually turned out to be blessings.

AUDIENCE

Next in the mass communication system is the audience - that all important and at the same time frustratingly complicated "target" which however does not behave like a target. It is not only obstinate but it is also uncomfortably active and

idiosyncratic. Its "selective attention" and "selective perception" makes the communicator's task anything but easy. He may have the best of motives and the most convincing of arguments, but if he does not gain attention and he is not accepted, or if accepted, is interpreted wrongly, his whole effort is wasted. Therefore to make sure that whatever effort the mass communication practitioner and the administrator are putting into their work is not entirely wasted, that effort must necessarily be based upon an understanding of the audience. To a large extent that audience is in fact the master. It is the receiver who decides whether he will indeed pay attention to a message and when he does it is again he who decides whether the message meets his needs and whether he will accept it and act upon it.

Such action, is after all the end result that the communicators' whole effort has been aimed at. While this is especially true in persuasive communication, it is also true in other forms of communication: in informing, in entertaining or, in purely commercial terms, even in selling a copy of a newspaper or a cinema seat. Apart from the receiver's own needs which a message may not satisfy, there is also the receiver's communication experience itself. He has been "taken" before, whether by a 48 point headline or an attractive poster advertising a movie, or the promises of the efficacy of a pill, which have not lived up to his expectations. Therefore he is either immunised or driven away. In any case he is often sceptical of anything smacking of persuasion. He is also made up of a set of beliefs and attitudes only some of which are relatively flexible.

Those of us who are practitioners of mass communication either must find our way through this maze or not enter it at all, unless we are satisfied with doing a half-hearted job of searching for the proper exit. We ourselves have to look for "cues", just as we expect the receiver to look for our cues. These cues are there for us to see if we take the time to look. Much like our own they too may not always deliver what they promise. It is our task to force the providers of those cues (in this case the communication researchers) to improve them. It is only the combined efforts of the senders and receivers of a message that can make that message effective. This is as true in the case of mass communication as in the case of mass communication research.

Effects

We have presented some generalizations on the effectiveness of mass communication and suggested that they have the power to focus attention, to confer status, etc. Also that while face-to-face communication is more effective than mass communication in persuading people, there are nevertheless points to remember about the differences among the media. Actual effects are harder to study. However, there are a few examples in the literature of mass communication. Most of these have been studied in the laboratory situation. They are harder to study in the natural situation because of the large numbers of variables present. However, there are some indications of value to the practitioner of mass communication. These have to do with the nature of argument, the level of discussion, the order of presentation, the intensity of fear appeals, etc.

We have deliberately refrained from dealing at any length with what may be called the "social effects" of mass communication. We have said that this is a much broader and almost a philosophical and moral question which may or may not be of direct import to the average practitioner and administrator. In any case it would make the discussion impossibly long. Generally speaking we have also refrained from getting into controversial issues, such as, for example, Marshall McLuhan's thesis that the "medium is the message". We have talked about the media and we have talked about the messages (or the content of communication) only in so far as research has something reasonably definite to say about them. Unfortunately McLuhan's thesis is still being discussed - sometimes vehemently and often in bewildered terms - by such varied people as mass communication scholars, public relations specialists and advertisers as well as by philosophers and intellectuals with a literary bent. Whether or not the introduction of print media and later the electronic media have influenced society positively or negatively to quite the extent McLuhan suggests, is a question which is too broad in its scope for a discussion such as ours which is necessarily limited in its objectives.

We have also refrained from discussing some of the relatively simpler questions such as the effects of television or film on children, or on adults or on society as a whole. In the latter case we have done so because research is continuing and has not come up with any clear conclusions.

More research is needed, in all areas, we have said, but the greater need seems to be for the practitioners of mass communication to try out some of the suggestions indicated in the research. It is only when this is done in the regular day-to-day work of the practitioner and the administrator of mass communication that the state of knowledge of the whole field of mass communication can move forward in any real sense. As long as the researcher is confined to his "laboratory" and the practitioner operates in the natural situation and the two do not meet, our knowledge of the effects of mass communication must remain limited.

One looks forward to the day when research in mass communication feeds the practice of mass communication and the lessons learnt in the practice of mass communication feed the researchers. Only then can mass communication, not only as a functional activity but also as an art form, flourish, and only then can a full-fledged "disciple" of communication emerge. The essence of the problem is not to bring about agreement but appreciation between the two groups.

APPENDIX

MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH: WHY AND HOW?

Perhaps the reader who has reached this point in the book would like to have a little more information on research itself, why it is done, when and how.

We submit that the first question is perhaps already answered adequately in the previous sections, even if it has been done by implication, rather than directly. Research is done simply because the practitioner of mass communication and the administrator of communication campaigns would necessarily prefer to approach their tasks on the basis of some fundamental knowledge of their media, of their audiences, of the process of information flow and of any possible effects their messages are likely to have.

The second question - when? - is perhaps even more obvious. Without being facetious, one would say: before, during and after. Before, because we need some basic knowledge; during, because we would like to know how we are doing and whether any changes in our approach are called for; after, because we surely would like to find out how effective we have been in reaching an audience, in making them understand and in convincing them of any arguments which we may have put forward.

The third question of how research is done is a more complicated one and we would do better to refer the reader to more specialized publications on this subject. Suffice it to say that there are many ways in which research can be done and many kinds of subjects which it can study. The methods of research will depend on the problem in hand and facilities available.

Basically, research is done to obtain dependable information - hopefully some of it, at least, will be of use to the operator of the media. Such information is obtained by scientific methods and in an objective fashion by trained people.

It would be tempting to say that some simple research can be done by experienced people who are capable of taking a detached approach to the task in hand, even if they have no specialized training. Such a statement would be, in a limited sense, perhaps accurate. However, there are very clear limits to such research. It would therefore be better if research is done by those who have had systematic training in its methods and its techniques.

For the average practitioner, however, it would be useful to have an idea of the kinds of research which are possible. These are perhaps to a large extent already clear from our earlier discussion. For example, we have seen that it is possible to study the content of our present productions by taking a close look at our own newspapers, or broadcasting schedules, etc. This area of research is referred to as content analysis. This is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the content. It helps the publisher of a newspaper or the head of a broadcasting station in assessing the kinds of programme or items which he has been putting out, such as economic news, political news, human interest stories, sports, etc.

After having done this, it may be useful to know what percentage of the audience is exposing itself, to any given category or indeed to any specific item. This aspect of communication research will fall under the much broader field of audience research. Sometimes, in the case of specific media, this involves the study of readership patterns or listenership patterns, etc. But it also means the gathering of information about a large number of characteristics of the audience, including their normal exposure to the media, their reactions to what they read and view, their attitudes to and opinions on various subjects and issues, their responses to specific messages, and finally their adoption of new practices and innovations which of course will also involve a change in attitudes.

"FEEDBACK"

The importance of audience research, especially in developing countries is self-evident. These countries need to bring their people to actively participate in development programmes and to discuss and express their opinions on the changes that are being brought about. It would also be useful for the leadership in these countries to have information

on the public's needs and interests. All these would fall under the general concept of "feedback" which we have discussed and which just means the information that comes back to a communicator telling him what reactions his receivers are having to the communication messages which he is sending out. Such information is of very practical relevance to the media practitioner because he does not normally have the benefit of feedback from his large audience as he would have in a face-to-face situation. It takes research to provide him with dependable feedback.

Another important type of research which seems simple to do but which also takes a great deal of training if it is to be done systematically and reliably is the case study. This means the gathering of information and the interpretation of such information and evidence to explain the behaviour of an individual or a community or a social institution. Usually this is done by an individual trained to observe, to ask questions, to collect as much data as he can and then analyse and present his conclusions in a descriptive, narrative form. Obviously, the reliability of a case study will depend on the person doing it. When it is done properly it can be very useful as a basis for future action on the part of the administrator and practitioner and also for further detailed investigation by researchers.

Another type of research is the experiment. This usually involves a group of people in a manageable geographical unit (such as a village) to whom certain kinds of messages are directed through certain channels to find out what changes in attitudes and behaviour may occur as a result. When this is done, the researcher would also like to have another village (called the control group) which will not receive this special treatment. By comparing the two groups at the end of the experiment, he will be able to tell what effect these particular messages sent through particular media have had. In other words, he can judge the efficacy of messages and media.

The usefulness of pre-testing has already been referred to. This technique, which is of great importance to administrator and practitioner alike, is the simple testing of information materials before they are duplicated or produced in large quantities and distributed. The tests are done on a small number of people who are typical of the kind of audience the material being tested is aimed at.

The way in which such a small group is selected (sampling), the way in which the questions are asked and questionnaires are administered, the way the final data is collected, collated and analysed are details which we will not go into. They will require lengthy discussion. Besides, there are some fairly basic research materials which will give the interested practitioner and administrator an adequate introduction to mass communication research techniques.

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* This is a short and highly selected list of books. They have been selected partly because of their intelligent and impressive treatment of the varied aspects of mass communication and partly because of their proven ability to hold the attention of the practitioner. A few of them which may not meet these qualifications are there because their contents have contributed to this book.

Many of the books included in this list are anthologies and the practitioner can choose the particular aspects of mass communication that he wants to read about. He will also find more extensive references in them - if he wants to read further.

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